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Recalling Busoni



Maria Stader
Internationally Admired Soprano

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Recalling Busoni

Editorial

THE RECORDING of Busoni's one-act opera, *Arluccchino*, has revived vivid memories of the lasting impression that the great pianist-composer made on me in my youth. In my fifteenth year, I was taken to a Busoni recital by a friend of the family who, being a proficient pianist, was able to awaken in me an appreciation for the outstanding qualities of Busoni's artistry. His amazing command and control of his instrument impressed me greatly, undoubtedly because I was being coached by a knowledgeable elder. It is a rare experience for a receptive youth to have an older person elucidate the interpretative excellences of an artist for, no matter the degree of concentrative effort that one so young applies to a recital, wherein the unfamiliar dominates the familiar, he is almost certain to find his mind wandering. Not so long ago, Columbia in his historically important series of *Great Masters of the Keyboard* provided a rare experience for me to relive two moments that lay dormant in memory. For, on its disc ML-4292, Columbia has provided posterity and old admirers of Busoni's artistry the rare opportunity of living intimately again and again with three short works that he made for the celebrated Welte piano rolls in the first decade of the century. Two of the selections, the Paganini-Liszt *La Campanella* and Chopin's *Prelude No. 15—"Raindrop"*—I heard him play, the former in a performance actually given for my ears. The third selection, the Beethoven-Liszt *Fantasia on "Ruins of Athens,"* I had not previously heard him perform.

Three years after that remembered recital, I heard Busoni perform the "Emperor" concerto and to this day no one has quite made the impression in that work that he did upon me. In my youth, he was the greatest pianist I ever heard, but subsequently as other outstanding pianists became more familiar to me and my appreciative faculties were developed more fully, I found just reasons to appreciate their artistry.

In 1915, I was living with my mother on 57th Street in New York in an apartment below one occupied by Miss Natalie Curtis, who had been a pupil of Busoni's and who had interested him in the Indian music that she had collected in the South Western sections of our country. He later utilized some of her thematic material in his *Indianische Fantasie*, for piano and orchestra, and in his *Indianisches Tagebuch*. One morning, Miss Curtis informed me that Busoni was coming to see her the following day and, because she knew I admired him greatly, she invited me to be present. It was an incentive to shirk school, which I did. I arrived before the great pianist did and,

being somewhat over-awed, retired to a corner of her large studio and focused my eyes on her piano with fervid wishes that he would perform on it.

When Busoni arrived, he exclaimed about the four flights of stairs he had to climb and sank into a chair. I was introduced and promptly returned to my corner. His graying, leonine locks of hair and his penetrating eyes fascinated me. (There is a picture of him in Edward J. Dent's biography, published by the Oxford University Press—plate 16, which recalls him vividly to my mind.) He had not taken off his coat, so Miss Curtis urged him to do so and helped him remove it. Since they were conversing in German, I understood very little of what was said. He asked a few questions evidently about me because suddenly he turned and asked me if I liked music, to which I replied in the affirmative. Miss Curtis explained that I was a student. The conversation turned to Beethoven and Miss Curtis asked some questions of Busoni regarding several sonatas. To my delight, he walked over to the piano and played some passages from several works of Beethoven, all the time talking to his hostess who leant over his shoulder. Opening the score of a sonata, unfamiliar to me, he pointed out certain passages and then started playing the first movement. Her piano, while in tune, was hardly an instrument for an artist of Busoni's standing to find satisfaction in his performance, but he played the entire movement nevertheless without comment. When he finished Miss Curtis expressed her appreciation in no uncertain terms and thanked him. Then, he turned his head in my direction and asked how the young man had enjoyed the movement. I replied that I was thrilled, which amused him no end. Then he asked me if I would like to hear something else, to which I replied unhesitatingly in the affirmative and promptly added I would like to hear the Liszt-Paganini *La Campanella*. He laughed heartily and said in English: "Liszt displaces Beethoven in the hearts of youth."

He then turned to the keyboard and played the *Campanella*, providing me with one of the greatest artistic thrills I ever had. Though, before playing, he announced that the piano would not do justice to his performance, it nevertheless impressed me more than it had in the concert hall. To this day, I do not know what opening movement from a Beethoven sonata he played for Miss Curtis; the fact that the great man had performed for me a requested work was all that mattered.

The reader who has followed this discourse with any interest will realize why the Columbia disc, containing an old favorite played by the great Busoni, has come to mean so much to me. Yet his performance of the Chopin *Prelude*, with its uncanny control, has given me the greatest pleasure, despite its inadequacies

of recording techniques. Of Busoni, the artist and man, I can speak all too little, for youth's perceptions are not to be trusted in that youth's emotions dictate its impressions. Not until the Columbia disc came along was I able to value the technical accomplishments of this artist, nor to realize the color and variety that he brought to his interpretations. Despite the inadequacies of the old recording, Busoni lives again for me whenever I play that disc. I am sure that there are others besides myself, who have had reason to be grateful to Columbia for its foresight in releasing its series, *Great Masters of the Keyboard*, though all too few remain today who were fortunate to hear many of the great artists in the series in person.

The Record Guide

Completely Revised

THE RECORD GUIDE by Edward Sackville-West and Desmond Shawe-Taylor with Andrew Porter and William Mann. Enlarged and Completely Revised 957 pp. Published by Collins, London, England. 35s. net.

▲THE original *Record Guide* by the two distinguished critics, Edward Sackville-West and Desmond Shawe-Taylor, was published in 1950 and followed by two supplements in 1952 and 1953. These publications were mainly addressed to English readers, since only American recordings released in England were considered in their pages. That they have proved their value to others besides the English is a tribute to the integrity of their authors. Not all recordings are listed but the omissions are mainly the inferior ones. Here, however, alternative versions are more plentiful than before. While the criticisms are astute, they are also in many cases more subjective than others, and not infrequently suggesting a bias toward certain ensembles or performers. Perhaps this is a subjective reaction on my part, and I hasten to elicit the good will of the authors, for both of whom I have a high regard. Tolerance is of course not practiced by critics, nor should it be, yet the reason for diversities of opinion must be borne in part by some understanding of tolerance, which is a law of nature. When we read, as we do in this book, that "there is not one single performance of a Beethoven string quartet that can be recommended," we wonder at the drastic condemnation, until we look further and discover that only the Pascal and Griller performances are involved since neither the Budapest nor Vegh versions were available in England. To be sure, the Pascal and Griller performances have not been too well received, but a few have been praised by other English critics as well as by some American ones. Strangely

(Continued on page 100)

"Ici on parle Francais"

Plays and Poems and Songs in French

By Dorothy S. Gelatt

MOLIERE: *Le Malade Imaginaire* (Comedy in 3 Acts, spoken in French); Romeo Carles (Argan), Mary Marquet (Béline), Marthe Mercadier (Toinette), Jacques Charon, Comédie Française, (Thomas Diafoirus), Raymond Souplex (Diafoirus), Marcel Carpentier (Béralde), Javotte Lehmann, Comédie Française, (Angélique), G. Vidal (Cléante). Incidental music by Destouches. Orchestra conducted by André Cadou. Concluded with *Cérémonie du Malade et Evocation de la Mort de Molière*. Romeo Carles (Argan-Molière), Max de Rieux (A Doctor-Lagrange). Incidental music by Lully, Charpentier and Gervais. Produced by Max de Rieux. London International Set TW-91076/7, \$9.96.

BEAUMARCHAIS: *Le Barbier de Seville* (Comedy in 4 Acts, spoken in French); Micheline Boudet, Comédie Française, (Rosine), Jean Weber (Count Almaviva), Jean Piat, Comédie Française, (Figaro), André Brunot, formerly Comédie Française, (Bartholo), Robert Pi-

zani (Bazile), Darry Cowl (Valet), A. Lurville (Servant), Totah (Notary), Roger Weber (Magistrate). Incidental music by Marcel Landowsky. Produced by Max de Rieux. London International Set TW-91058/9, \$9.96.

SACHA GUITRY: *Ecoutez Bien, Messieurs*. (Divertissement in 4 Acts, spoken in French); Sacha Guitry (Michel), Lana Marconi (Escaterina), Jeanne Fusier-Gir (Maria), Renée Stève Passeur (Madame Tops). Musical interludes from "Mozart" by Reynaldo Hahn, played by Jacque Dupont, piano. Produced by Max de Rieux. London International Set TW-91060/1, \$9.96.

RICTUS: *Poèmes de Jehan Rictus* (Maurice Chevalier delivers 5 poems by Jehan Rictus: *Nocturne, Les petites barriques, Jasant de la vieille, Idylle, Le revenant*). Original music by Fred Freed played on the organ and accordion by Freddy Balta. Produced by Max de Rieux. London International TW-91065, \$4.98.

Poèmes par Madeleine Renaud Madeleine Renaud speaks French poetry: *J'ai peur d'un baiser, Kaleidoscope, Green, D'une prison*. (Paul Verlaine) *Le temps de vivre* (Comtesse de Noailles) *Qu'en avez-vous fait, Les regrets* (Desbordes-Valmore) *La Vierge à midi* (Paul Claudel) *Dieu et les Français, L'enfant qui s'endort, L'esperance* (Charles Peguy) London International W-91070, \$4.98.

Rendez-vous a Paris, No. 3 Maurice Chevalier sings, mutters and spins on end a number of songs by himself and others. *Viens dans mon hélicoptère, Deux amoureux sur un banc, Mon p'tit moustique, Loin du pays, La chanson des lilas, C'est l'amour, Un gentleman, Rendez-vous à Paris, Chapeau de paille*. Orchestras conducted by Fred Freed, Georges Ghestem and Paul Durand. London International WB-91080, \$4.98.

Madeleine
Renaud



Mon Beaux Sabot Doré Madeleine Renaud and Pierre Bertin recite and sing poems and little stories for children by Marcelle Bertin. Music by Pierre-Petit played on the piano by the author and Genevieve Roy. Produced by Max de Rieux. London International W-91090, \$4.98.

▼
OF ALL THE things we Americans admire, imitate or import from France, we manage to pay the least attention and do the least justice to the language. We copy their fashions "line for line," we guzzle their superb champagne and wine, we tour their country from stem to stern. And after two years of "high-school French" we fracture their language. (You can spot an American in Paris with your eyes closed!)

The French language has been sharpening its classic clarity and polishing its brilliant accent for more than a thousand years, but it never got itself a real foothold in America. The early French explorers and settlers made a spattering of permanent marks on our map, but after their initial splash they either went back to France or were mixed in with the new American stew. Historically, then, there is no background for French in America, and so it has not become the mark of culture or the language of professional diplomacy here that it has been elsewhere in the world.

While lack of French is no real detriment to our foreign diplomacy (the rest of the world is learning English!) it is something of a pity for us culturally. French is the most beautiful of modern languages—to hear, to speak, to read and to think. And of course, quantities of the world's great literature, philosophy and science originated in French minds and in the French tongue.

Until very recently the only way most Americans could hear real French was to go to France, or to a French movie if they were lucky enough to live in a town that played them. Things are changing now, however, and today anyone with an



Micheline Boudet

LP player can sit back in his own *fauteuil* at home and hear all sorts of French performances by some of the greatest *speaking* voices of France.

In recent months several record companies have started issuing French records in the American market. The group discussed here are some notable recordings from the London International releases. They span four centuries and include a wide assortment of subject matter from a Molière classic (17th century) to some contemporary stories and poems for children. They are an exciting sampling of French theater and poetry acted, recited, whispered, shouted or sung by an assortment of Frenchmen—and women—so skilled in the art of their own language that they can make it sound like music. Which it very often is.

Molière (1622-1673)—who, like Shakespeare, was an itinerant actor-turned-playwright and genius of his own national theater—wrote *Le Malade Imaginaire* in 1673, and himself played the leading role of Argan the hypochondriac. In this instance real life was more painful than poetry, and Molière was carried from the stage with a fatal seizure the week the play opened. (Which accounts for the imaginary recreation of Molière's own death scene which the producer of this recording has oddly appended to the play.)

Great French Comedy

Classic French comedy was at its greatest in Molière, who probed and exposed every human frailty, foible and injustice, in characters of vibrant individualism, never stuffed "types." *Le Malade Imaginaire* is bitter, brilliant, and the final dazzling zenith of Molière's many attacks on the medical quackery of his day. This performance on London International is skilled, facile and full of the infinite shadings of voice and tempo that make the French classic theater timeless. In this recording each voice is distinctive in both range and character, and we can close our eyes and easily imagine that we are hearing Molière's own *Troupe du roi*, which after his death became the Comédie Française of today.

Baumarchais (1732-1799) unlike Molière, was not a full-time dramatist. He was primarily an adventurer—with a literary flair—and when he wasn't writing (which was most of the time) he indulged in skulduggery from Paris to Madrid and points east and west. His two great successes in the theater—*Le Barbier de Seville* (1775) and *Le Mariage de Figaro* (1784)—inspired the Rossini and Mozart operas.

Among the actors assembled for the London International recording of *Le Barbier de Seville* there is one of the more luminous voices of the current Comédie Française—Micheline Boudet, who plays Rosine. Mlle. Boudet delighted Broadway audiences with many performances during the Comédie Française visit to

New York earlier this season. She plays all her roles with an artistic surety and a theatrical magnificence rarely seen in America, where we have no tradition of a national repertory theater. Her expressiveness and dramatic ease are as memorable on these records as they are on the stage—which is lucky for us, indeed. André Brunot's Bartholo is excellent opposite Mlle. Boudet. And if voices of Jean Weber's Count Almaviva and Jean Piat's Figaro get tangled up from time to time, it is easy to forgive them for both sounding like handsome devils. Everyone who is fond of the operatic *Barbier* ought to try this dramatic one and "compare."

Ecoutez Bien Messieurs... is an amusing but fairly complicated play within a play written by the contemporary Sacha



Maurice Chevalier
NBC Television Photo

Guitry, another Frenchman of many talents in the theater. Americans know him well from the movies. In this "Divertissement" he is billed not only as the author but he also plays the lead, Michel. The album copy tells us that "...the play on these records is spoken in a clear and straightforward French." That "...it is the art that conceals art developed to such a pitch of sophistication that it can seem to reveal itself disarmingly without fear of giving away any secrets." And that Sarah Bernhardt was a witness at the wedding when Guitry's father married Guitry's mother—and 32 years later at Guitry's own wedding to Yvonne Printemps. All strictly true.

The *Poèmes de Jehan Rictus* are harder to understand than the Guitry play. Rictus (1867-1938) wrote in *patois* and the words slur together alarmingly. These are tragic poems of broken people and it is a rather strenuous excursion into

misery to hear them all at one sitting. Maurice Chevalier reads and breathes and lives the poems with great guttural depth. It is an unexpected and astounding performance.

The poems on Madeleine Renaud record are much lighter and brighter and even when they are sad it is with pathos, not with degradation. Like Micheline Boudet, Mlle. Renaud has an unforgettable style, an unbroken range of vocal color, and a diction we could all strive after. Of all the poems on this record the Verlaine are likely to be the most familiar. Debussy, Fauré and Reynaldo Hahn all set various of them to music and at least two on this record—*D'une prison* and *Green*—have been available in song recordings. Mlle. Renaud's reading of *D'une prison* (which begins with the timeless glimpse of the sky: *Le ciel est par-dessus le toit*) is as moving and as musical as Ninon Vallin singing the Hahn version or Pierre Bernac singing Fauré's.

Mlle. Renaud and Pierre Bertin share little poems and stories for children in the recording of Marcelle Bertin's *Mon Beau Sabot Doré*. This recording reminds us that French children are really miniature grown-ups, and for that reason alone it is a wonderful beginning for any grown-up who would like to learn French.

And finally, regardless of your French status, there is a new record of Maurice Chevalier singing his ebullient best, and beckoning you to another *Rendez-vous à Paris* (No. 3, in case you missed the other two). There are nine zippy songs including "Viens dans mon hélicoptère," which seems to be an up-dated French version of "Come Josephine in My Flying Machine".

The recording balances and surfaces of all these discs are uniformly excellent. But there is one serious regret. Unlike the Period Records, which include a number of French plays by full Comédie Française casts, these issues are not accompanied by texts. This may make it a bit difficult for the American listener, although it is not too hard to locate texts of some of the plays and poems. Classical Larousse editions are excellent and inexpensive and can be ordered through book stores.

Elizabethan Verse

AN EVENING OF ELIZABETHAN VERSE AND ITS MUSIC: W. H. Auden (reader), Ruth Daigon (soprano), Jean Hakes (soprano), Russell Oberlin (countertenor), Charles Bressler (tenor), Arthur Squires (tenor), Brayton Lewis (bass), Paul Maynard (harpsichord) and the New York Pro Musica Antiqua directed by Noah Greenberg. Columbia ML-5051, \$3.98.

▲THE New York Pro Musica Antiqua group performs in ensemble with precision.

and intricacy as finely balanced as a fine jeweled watch. Their discipline is faultless in this collection of fourteen Elizabethan songs by an assortment of composers (including John Dowland, Orlando Gibbons, Thomas Weelkes and John Wilbye) and authors (including Edmund Spenser, John Donne, Michael Drayton, Thomas Campion, Ben Jonson and Anonymous).

This recording follows the style of a concert of the same works given by the same group in New York last year. First Mr. Auden reads the poem and then the group performs it with music. Unfortunately, Mr. Auden is the only one on stage working outside of his own immediate medium. Although he is one of our leading poets, he is not a professional on the stage.

From time to time soloists step forward from the musical group, giving emphasis or change of pace to the collection of madrigals and lute songs. Especially notable is Russell Oberlin's countertenor in a song like John Dowland's *In Darkness Let me Dwell*. Altogether, the recording is a delightful glimpse into a bygone era, which Mr. Auden describes with his customary brilliant scholarship in the album notes. Some of the songs are published in *An Elizabethan Song Book*, an Anchor Book available at bookstores.

—D.S.G.

SIR MAX

SIR MAX BEERBOHM: *The Crime and London Revisited*, two essays read by the Author. Angel 35206, \$4.98 or \$3.48.

▲LAST things first, for a special reason. This record is stunningly packaged, with a wide-eyed, caricatured self portrait of the author on the slip case, and the title printed in an exotic, untypical type face called Mistral. Well, now! A mistral, as all you weather experts know, is "a cold, dry, northerly wind common in Southern France and neighboring regions", according to the American College Dictionary. And Sir Max Beerbohm, as all you art and literature experts know, is a dry northerner who blew out of London many years ago into one of those "neighboring regions"—Rapallo, on the Italian Riviera. All too seldom in the current rage of record album art do you find a cover design more handsome or more closely connected with the subject of the record than this one.

Sir Max Beerbohm's dual talents are deftly summarized in "The Irony of Max," the record notes written by Alan Dent of the *London News Chronicle*: "He is the gentlest of all the bitter satirists of both pen and pencil."

In a gentle voice, at the age of 82 in 1954, Sir Max recorded two essays: *The*

Crime (1920), an essay of destruction in which he tries to burn a book and fails; and *London Revisited* (1935) an essay of reconstruction in which he surveys what he considers the ruins of 1935 London and then recreates the city in the image of his childhood. This latter was originally delivered as a broadcast talk on the B.B.C. and is re-delivered here nearly 20 years later—after a war which intensified the scar-face of London which Beerbohm so deplored. "The Irony of Max" is ironic indeed.

—D.S.G.

OPERA SPOTLIGHT

BUSONI: *Arlecchino* (Opera in 1 Act); Ian Wallace (Sarto, a master tailor), Kurt Gesler (Arlecchino, narrator), Geraint Evans (Abbate Cospicuo), Fritz Ollendorff (Dottore Bombasto), Elaine Malbin (Colombina), Murray Dickie (Leandro, a knight), Glyndebourne Festival Orchestra conducted by John Pritchard. RCA Victor set LM-1944, \$3.98.

▲BUSONI'S *Arlecchino*, which received its first performance at Zurich in May of 1917, is an opera that one cannot pigeon-hole. Edward J. Dent says in his book on the composer that "*Arlecchino* was less of a new comedy of masks [which the composer had intended it to be] than a serious satire on the theatre, the conventional opera, the war, and human nature in general." In its way, it is a dated piece and yet, being close to the second World War, we are able to understand his satiric purpose. Some have compared this opera to Verdi's *Falstaff* but its carefully premeditated workmanship is far removed from Verdi. Dent goes on to say that "Few of Busoni's compositions gave him

so much satisfaction as *Arlecchino*; both a literary and musical point of view he regarded it as his most individual and personal work. One reason for its lack of popularity up to the present is that it demands an unusual alertness of mind on the part of the spectator," to which your present reporter can say an ardent Amen. On first acquaintance, one regards the orchestra as the main protagonist, but on careful study of the text one realizes the latter's importance, if more graphically elucidated in the orchestra. While Busoni aimed for a "Comedy of Masks," similar to 17th-century Italian works, he wrote his libretto mainly in the German language with punctuations of Italian, Latin and French texts. Rather confusing, one might say. However, Victor has provided a first-rate English translation by Nicolai Rabenack. The opera is divided into four scenes, each of which revolves around the mechanisms of *Arlecchino*—the hero and villain of the piece. The first scene is a parody on an enemy invasion—*Arlecchino* being the main protagonist with another man's wife. The second scene is the enemy's manner of disposing of a foe—*Arlecchino* disguised as a recruiting officer sends the husband off to war. Scene three is a parody on Italian *melodrama* in which *Arlecchino's* wife is wooed by a knight with whom he has a mock duel though he blesses the knight's proposed marriage to his former wife. Scene four is a roundup—the various characters taking their leave of the audience and *Arlecchino* taking unto himself another wife who is the former wife of the master tailor he sent to war.

The music is ingenious and, in its way, diverting. The vocal music serves its purpose without leaving any memories of a particular part. There are no set arias. This is the sort of opera that should be visualized for full enjoyment providing, of course, that one has thoroughly familiarized oneself with the text. The performers are well trained in their parts. Kurt Gesler, as *Arlecchino*, handles his spoken dialogue effectively, especially in his timing with the music. Ian Wallace is especially successful in the role of the master tailor. Geraint Evans, as the Abbot, and Fritz Ollendorff, as the Doctor, make the most of their comic roles though vocally they are rather mealy voiced. Elaine Malbin, always a reliable artist, is at her best when singing, and Murray Dickie's knight is well played and sung. But it remains the orchestra that is of utmost importance, for Busoni has written cleverly at all times for its detailing episode and character, and John Pritchard conducts with complete self-assurance. The recording is much better than in the recent Glyndebourne *Figaro* set, though it could have been bettered with more room resonance. However, the clarity of the orchestral texture is praiseworthy.

—P.H.R.



Sir Max Beerbohm

MOZART: *Don Giovanni* (Opera in 2 Acts); Maria Curtis Verna (Donna Anna), Carla Gavazzi (Donna Elvira), Elda Ribetti (Zerlina), Cesare Valletti (Don Ottavio), Giuseppe Taddei (Don Giovanni), Italo Tajo (Leporello), Antonio Zerbini (Il Commendatore), Vito Susca (Masetto), Orchestra and Chorus of the Radio & Television of Turin, Max Rudolf (cond.) Cetra C-1253 (3 discs) \$14.94.

▲CETRA now invades the field of Mozart Bicentennial celebrations with an interesting and admirable performance of *Don Giovanni*. Recorded in Turin, last summer, the present album meets as its only serious rival the much-praised London set, which for balanced ensemble, precision, and beauty of sound is probably the most obvious choice. However, the Cetra entry has its own very strong points. Max Rudolf of the Metropolitan conducts an arresting performance. At his disposal is the Radio-Turin orchestra, a group of evidently moderate size, with rather astringent strings (probably not unacceptable in Mozart's day), and unusually good woodwinds. Much of the subtler moments of orchestral detail stand out with stenciled clarity in Mr. Rudolf's stylistic reading.

Cetra also offers another trump card in Giuseppe Taddei, who sings the title-role. Mr. Taddei is a real baritone with a lovely *mezza-voce* and sonorous open tones, when he desires to use them. Mozart doubtlessly intended the role of Don Giovanni for just such a voice. Cotogni, Maurel, Lassalle, Battistini, Renaud, Scotti, Stabile—famous Don Giovannis—were all baritones. Ezio Pinza, a basso who happened to have the "physique du rôle" to a degree, set the style for this invasion of baritone territory, and today we have Siepi, Rossi-Lemeni, Hines and other basses following the example of the mercurial Ezio. However, no basso could possibly toss off the recitatives with the feather-lightness of Mr. Taddei, or sing the *Champagne Aria* with such brilliant and debonair effect. Taddei adds a memorable portrait to his already distinguished Falstaff, William Tell, and Marcello. He is evidently a great singing-actor.

Italo Tajo, the Leporello, is a more subtle and imaginative artist than London's Corena, but the latter's rather stolid voice and manner are perhaps better suited to the dull-witted peasant. Nevertheless, Tajo compliments Taddei in elegant and pungent fashion. Cesare Valletti sings a very mediocre *Della sua pace*, but an extremely able *Il mio tesoro*. His Ottavio has dignity and a few forced tones. The casting of Maria Curtis Verna and Carla Gavazzi, as Donna Anna and Donna Elvira, could start an argument. Miss Gavazzi, particularly, is a controversial selection. This soprano of the *verismo* school does not sing with the

stylistic smoothness of London's Lisa Della Casa, but she is far more dominating and imperious, which Elvira should be. Her vehement portrayal of the desperate woman is in the grand manner, even though the difficult scale-passages of *Mi tradi* give her trouble. Miss Della Casa's disciplined Elvira seems pale indeed by comparison. Miss Verna does surprisingly well with the very difficult *fioritura* of *Non mi dir bell' idol mio*, and though her style is not so aristocratic as London's Suzanne Danco, she is warmer and more effective in many scenes. Miss Danco sounds perilously like a chamber-opera Donna Anna, at times. For my taste, Antonio Zerbini is the most effective Commendatore on records, while Vito Susca is properly rough and earthy as Masetto. Elda Ribetti is an entirely believable Zerlina, though not so good as London's Hilde Gueden.

The ensembles are beautifully conducted by Rudolf, and the sound and reproduction, if less velvety than London's, has its points. Rudolf's fine conducting, Taddei's memorable Don, and the controversial but interesting ladies of the cast may give you pause in a thoughtful choice.

—M.de S.

●
PERGOLESI: *La Serva Padrona*; Rosanna Carteri (Serpina), Nicola Rossi-Lemeni (Uberto), Orchestra of La Scala, Milan conducted by Carlo Maria Giulini. Angel 35279/L, \$4.98.

▲ANGEL'S release of *La Serva Padrona* is a little jewel of the first water. An up-to-date recording of this captivating *opera buffa* was badly needed, for the Cetra set, recorded in 1950, sounds dated. Furthermore, the casting of the present issue is ideal—Rosanna Carteri (absent from discs for some time) is immeasurably better than Angela Tuccari of the earlier set, and Nicola Rossi-Lemeni's Uberto has a decided edge on Sesto Bruscantini's.

First produced in 1733 at the Teatro di San Bartolomeo in Naples, *La Serva Padrona* was used (according to the custom of the day) as a between-the-acts comedy-relief for Pergolesi's *Il Prigionier Superbo*. This serious opera is now forgotten, but the deft comic touches and beguiling set numbers of the humble *opera-buffa* still hold the stage. The characters here, Serpina and Uberto, are the precursors of the later Norina and Don Pasquale—the older man embroiled with a headstrong young girl situation.

The present recording marks the first effort on discs of the La Piccola Scala, a small, new theater attached to the famous La Scala, where chamber operas and works requiring intimate surroundings are given. Actual recording took place in La Piccola Scala, and the sense of intimacy, so necessary for *La Serva Padrona*, is completely realized.

Rossi-Lemeni performs with real elegance and humor, and with a wonderfully

right style for the music of Uberto, while Carteri is delightful as Serpina, singing beautifully and not falling into the trap of making the girl shrewish and vixenish to the point of being unsympathetic. Carlo Maria Giulini and a chamber version of the La Scala orchestra (harpsichord employed during the recitatives) give a sparkling account of Pergolesi's score.

Should you need proof of the strides made in reproduction during the last five years, compare this crystal-clear recording with the 1950 Cetra set, which, in its day, was greatly praised for its sound. Admirable notes, libretto and translation come with the album.

—M.deS.

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PUCCHINI: *Turandot*; Inge Borkh (Turandot), Mario del Monaco (Calaf), Renata Tebaldi (Liu), Nicola Zaccaria (Timur), Ping (Fernando Corena), Pang (Mario Carlin), Pong (Renato Ercolani), Altoum (Gaetano Fanelli), Mandarin (Ezio Giordano), Chorus and Orchestra of the Accademia di Santa Cecilia, Rome, conducted by Alberto Erede. London set XLLA-36, 3 discs, \$14.94.

▲THIS NEW recorded version of Puccini's last, uncompleted opera boasts of many attractive qualities. The soprano who essays the leading role must have commanding presence, tremendous stamina for the high tessitura and above all, a brilliant, glittering voice. The tenor part calls for an heroic voice, capable of great contrasting emotions. The second soprano role also demands perfection on a somewhat smaller scale. The lesser roles are no less important, and the chorus must be a well-trained body, for it has a great deal of effective music. In this set, we have the soprano Inge Borkh in the title role. She has most of the attributes for the part. The only thing lacking seems to be the excitement that should be conveyed to the listener. She sings the part brilliantly, but there is not enough of the feeling that Gina Cigna got in her performance, even though it was not as well sung. One really has to go back to the fabulous Eva Turner record of *In questa reggia* for a really hair-raising rendition of this music. Miss Borkh comes close, but there is more in the part than she gives it. However, hers is still the most impressive performance on LP. Mario del Monaco gives his best performance to date. He can still shout with the best, but he can also sing softly, with a lyric quality that is very attractive. Tonally he is about as satisfactory as one would wish. Renata Tebaldi may sound a bit mature for the innocent, fragile Liu, but there is no denying the touching quality of her interpretation. The sheer beauty of her tone is most appealing. Nicola Zaccaria is heard in the role of Timur. If his voice is a bit too youthful for this role he also wins one by the sheer beauty of his tone. Fernando Corena is ideally cast as Ping, and the others in the trio have fine voices.

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One of the most attractive things about this performance is the magnificent singing of the St. Cecilia Academy Chorus. Earlier recorded performances have had satisfactory choruses, but never before have they sounded as effective as this one. Alberto Erede is a bit tame in his leadership, but the sheer volume of sound is nevertheless impressive, especially in the riddle scene, where the soloists, chorus and orchestra combine to present one of the most spectacular combinations yet recorded.

Although one may have reservations about a few qualities of this recorded performance the overall impression is favorable. The quality of sound is spectacular and the singing is on a level all too rarely encountered in the opera house or recording. This easily supersedes the earlier Cetra and Remington versions, and may well remain the standard for many years. —R.R.

VERDI: *La Forza del Destino*—Highlights; Zinka Milanov, Jan Peerce, Leonard Warren, Nicola Moscona, Raymond Keast, the Robert Shaw Chorale, RCA Victor Orchestra conducted by Renato Cellini and Jonel Perlea. RCA Victor LM-1916, \$3.98.

▲RCA VICTOR has here assembled 53 minutes of gilt-edged highlights (approximately a third of the opera). In the current excitement arising over the glamor attached to Callas, Tebaldi, and their reported rivalry, soprano enthusiasts are apt to forget Milanov, who, since 1937, has carried the Ponselle-type of roles at the Metropolitan with the most sumptuously beautiful voice heard here since the retirement of that former great singer.

New in this recording is Mme. Milanov's expressively poised singing of her opening aria, *Me pellegrina ed orfana*, and her luminous participation in the final trio, which closes the opera. We now have the prima-donna's complete final scene with her *Pace, mio Dio* followed by the final holocaust, in which Peerce, Moscona, and Warren give her first class support. Corralled from the earlier Victor disc, *Milanov Sings*, are the passages from the Convent Scene, *Madre, pietosa Vergine* and *La Vergine degl'Angeli*, in which the Shaw Chorale supports the soloist. It is indeed a pleasure to have so much of Milanov's Donna Leonora on records, for without doubt she has here vouchsafed some of her most distinguished singing, including many examples of her utterly ravishing *pianissimo*.

Peerce and Warren are presented in the famous *Solenne in quest'ora* duet (immortalized by Caruso and Scotti in 1906), and the later and far more demanding duel-scene, *Invano, Alvaro*. One presumes that these are new recordings, for though Peerce and Warren recorded both these passages during 1947, the conductors, on

that occasion, were Leinsdorf and Morel, neither of whom is mentioned in connection with the present recording. Both singers deliver their lines with fine musicianship, if without all the urgency that can be bestowed upon these passages. Peerce is only moderately successful in his voicing of Alvaro's difficult aria, *O tu che in seno agl' Angeli*, where more voice is required. Warren sings Don Carlo's great scene, *Morir, tremenda cosa!*, which oddly enough seems better reproduced, certainly with more volume than in the singer's current *Verdi Baritone Arias*.

Despite many admirable elements, the chief interest in this disc lies in the memorable singing of Donna Leonora's music by Zinka Milanov. —M.de S.

VERDI: *La Forza del Destino*; Mario Del Monaco (Don Alvaro); Renata Tebaldi (Leonora); Ettore Bastianini (Don Carlo); Cesare Siepi (Padre Guardiano); Fernando Corena (Fra Melitone); Giulietta Simionato (Preziosilla); Piero Di Palma (Trabucco); Silvio Maionica (Calatrava); Gabriella Carturan (Curra); Ezio Giordano (Alcade); Eraldo Coda (Chirugo); Chorus and Orchestra of the Santa Cecilia Academy, Rome, conducted by Francesco Molinari-Prandelli. London set XLLA-37, 4 discs, \$19.92.

▲LAST April, Angel issued its version of *La Forza* with Callas, Tucker, Tagliabue, Nicolai and Rossi-Lemeni, quite an array of Italian operatic celebrities with one American. Now comes London with an imposing group of all-Italian celebrities—Tebaldi, Del Monaco, Bastianini, Simonato, Corena and Siepi. To assemble a cast like the latter is no easy task for a record company since contractual commitments rarely find six singers like these available at one time in one place. London pridefully points to this fact, and informs us that it is doubtful that a similar cast could be brought together for the mutual advantage of all concerned. Most of the latter group are singers now well known and admired for their performances in *La Forza* at the Metropolitan Opera, the exception being Simonato, whose debut there was postponed last spring. Next year, Callas may be heard in the role of Leonora, but at present Tebaldi has won the approval of Metropolitan audiences in that role. To compare present-day casts of *La Forza* at the Metropolitan with former ones is not quite fair since only the old-timers remember the days of Ponselle, Caruso or Martinelli, Amato or Danise, and Pinza. To be sure, there are many recordings of excerpts from this opera by these singers which reveal their splendid artistry, but present-day singers are the living performers. They deserve to be considered on their own merits with comparisons confined among them.

The merits of Tebaldi's and Callas' performances of Leonora are about equal.

The former is more consistently opulent in tone and she possesses the truly ingratiating *pianissimo*. Her performance that I heard at the Metropolitan was better sung than this one on records; there is a feeling of less spontaneity at times in her singing here, which may be due to the fact that she sang for this recording in July at the end of a season. But her vocal assurance, her feeling for the part and the consistent beauty of her singing are attributes that would have forestalled my observation had I not heard her recently in person. I am sure that repeated playings of this set will gradually erase my opera house memories and leave me enjoying her performance as I should. I might even forget that others have sung the last part of "Pace, pace" in a neater manner. She does not quite efface memories of Milanov at her finest in several selections, which have been fortunately captured on records, but I doubt that Milanov would come off with as high honors as Tebaldi if she tackled the complete opera today in a recording.

Of the two Don Alvaros, Tucker is the more persuasive singer despite his affected emotionalisms in which the singer of yesteryear did not indulge themselves. Mario Del Monaco is more earthy, more forceful and at times even more radiant, but he lacks subtleties. But Del Monaco is competing in part with a baritone with a flair for the dramatic that cannot be submerged. Bastianini has a big voice and he can pour it out like the late Tito Ruffo. No one can deny the rousing effects that Del Monaco and Bastianini contrive, matching each other in volume of sound. This sort of singing provides an undeniable thrill and it must be said that both singers are at their best when singing at full voice. When Del Monaco strives to lighten his voice, as in "Solenne in quest' ora," he does not succeed in achieving the results for which he undoubtedly aims. But, let it be said he has learned to modulate his voice better than he did a couple of years ago. He is truly sensational when employing his full, ringing tones—a formidable masculine operatic tenor.

Simionato's Preziosilla is finer than Angel's Nicolai and Corena's Melitone is a vast improvement on Angel's Capecchi, and Corena has the fullest opportunities to display his acting abilities since the Kitchen Scene in Act IV is not cut out here. It is worth the price of the extra record. Siepi as Padre Guardiano appeals to me more than did Rossi-Lemeni, whose clouded vocalism belies the true Italian. The lesser parts are well handled. A word of praise should be said for the singing of the fine Santa Cecilia Chorus.

The reproduction of this new *La Forza* is truly magnificent, with vocal and orchestral presence and a fine balance that is gratifying to the ears. Care has been taken to give credence to off-stage and other effects. The recording honors definitely belong to London.

Molinari-Prandelli is a real improvement over other Italian conductors engaged by London for their complete Italian operas, though he is not quite the equal of the veteran Serafin in achieving more glowing climaxes. However, Molinari-Prandelli is not guilty of letting some scenes slow down as Serafin does; rather, he keeps the music moving at all times though he is definitely the type of Italian conductor that does not permit his orchestra to usurp the singers' rights with the result that his orchestra is never a competing protagonist as in a Toscanini performance.

London can take pride in this recording, not alone for its sound but for the appreciable work of its participants. It has only one competitor, the Angel set, and a choice between them will be governed by the taste of the listener. The old Cetra and the later Urania sets are full of moth holes in comparison to these newer ones, being definitely third-rate performances of a notable operatic score.

—P.H.R.

The Record Guide

(Continued from page 102)

enough, the one ensemble that is farthest from mastering "the different styles required of these works" is the Pascal Quartet, and yet that group's recordings have been placed in more unwary music listeners' homes than any others, owing to their distribution by one of the so-called record clubs. But this is digressing from my subject. If the authors on occasion gives us mild or strong jolts, they nevertheless provide much food for thought, and this is the type of critical writing to make a reader re-consider the limitations of his own point of view.

Alec Robertson, reviewing this book in January 1956 issue of *The Gramophone*, says: "Inevitably comparisons and summings up can, in some cases, only be considered as provisional, though in others they can be regarded as reasonably final; and it must be remembered that the authors do not set themselves up to be Solomons, but ask readers to exercise charity if they feel that they have been misled and apologize to performers whose work they may have misjudged." The latter part of this quote is not quite clear in statement, for one wonders if it implies that the authors would feel impelled at any time to apologize to performers. Few critics are known ever to do this.

No one but a reviewer, who has exposed himself to the countless recordings—even in part—that are being released these days, can realize the arduous task a book like this entailed. The profusion of recordings, says the authors in their Introduction, makes the task not only arduous but unmanageable. To be fair to competition, to strive for any degree of tolerance, is often highly difficult. The width of the "vision" often negates George Eliot's

sagacious remark that "the responsibility of tolerance lies with those who have the wider vision." The breadth of vision in the recording field is often taxing to a man's mental as well as critical resources. When the authors add that "often we have felt like four sorcerer's apprentices, each facing his private flood," we can realize the mental fatigue to which they were subjected. No matter what individual offenses readers may charge against the authors at any place in this lengthy tome, they should in all honesty recall the plight that they admit having faced. On the whole, their integrity is unassailable, and I cannot imagine any serious listener not finding this book a worthy addition to his record library shelf.

Mr. Robertson, in *The Gramophone*, points out some inaccuracies in statements regarding vocal selections which are observations of a keen scholar. Since I have not had the time to digest fully this book, it is impossible for me to do full justice to its lengthy work. But being a keen admirer of the two main authors, whose work I have followed for a number of years, I am delighted to have this revision of their former books which I have read and reread with considerable interest. In the Preface, the authors speak of this being perhaps the final edition of *The Record Guide*—a lamentable statement to read. Anyway, on the cover, the publishers state a supplement is to be published in 1956 which is good news indeed.

—P.H.R.

Heifetz Plays



BRUCH: *Violin Concerto No. 2 in D minor, Op. 44*; **WIENIAWSKI:** *Violin Concerto No. 2 in D minor, Op. 22*; Jascha Heifetz, RCA Victor Symphony Orchestra conducted by Izler Solomon. RCA-Victor LM-1931, \$3.98.

▲THERE is only one Jascha Heifetz, just as there is only one David Oistrakh. For some the recent spotlight placed on Oistrakh might have diminished the glow that Heifetz has oaked in for years, but not, I feel certain, for all. These violinists have much in common; they are expert performers often seemingly more dedicated to technical perfection than to the music that it serves, yet both command wide respect for their singularly gifted musicianship. In resurrecting Max Bruch's second violin concerto from the dust of music shelves, Heifetz has shown his appreciation for a work which his late teacher, Leopold Auer, valued highly. I will not gainsay the more immediately ingratiating qualities of the *G minor Concerto*, but the *D minor* is in many ways a more daring work though it is definitely at this time a dated work of the romantic era. However, so too is the *G minor*. The opening movement here is "a profoundly felt musical composition," says Auer,

"which captivates both player and audito through an employ of the noblest artistic means of appeal." Listening to Heifetz play this movement, one cannot quite deny Auer's estimation, which he made as late as 1925. Undeniably, this is the most important movement of the concerto, full of drama and variety despite its *Adagio* marking. It is followed by a Recitative and *Allegro* and a quick finale.

The Wieniawski concerto was the product of a noted violin virtuoso. While it is an eclectic work, it is so brilliantly and spontaneously written that it has never lost its popularity in the concert hall, particularly when leading virtuosos perform it. This has long been a show piece for Heifetz's artistic talents and he tosses it off in a manner that none of his competitors can quite do. Its merits are appraised, its demerits are forgotten, when a violinist of his magnitude performs it. Mr. Solomon and his orchestra serve the Heifetz violin faithfully, and the recording engineers have provided violinist and orchestra with brilliant recording.

—P.H.R.

Scherchen Reissues



BEETHOVEN: *The Nine Symphonies*; Vienna State Opera Orchestra and Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra of London conducted by Hermann Scherchen, with Magda Laszlo, Hilde Roessl-Majdan, Petre Munteanu, Richard Standen and Wiener Singakademie in the *Ninth Symphony*. Westminster De Luxe set 7701, 7 discs, \$34.86.

HAYDN: *The London Symphonies* (*Symphonies No. 93 through No. 104*); Vienna Symphony Orchestra and Vienna State Opera Orchestra conducted by Hermann Scherchen. Westminster De Luxe set WN-6601, 6 discs, \$29.88.

▲WESTMINSTER has re-mastered the nine Beethoven symphonies and the complete series of Haydn's last twelve, written for the Salomon concerts in London during the last decade of the 18th century. Particular care has been taken with regards to dynamics with the result that the overall sound runs the gamut from true *pianissimo* to realistic *fortissimo*. Modern advances in tape technique permit better realization of recordings made a couple of years back. Both sets are handsomely packed in silver cloth albums, which can be wiped off at any time with a damp cloth, and each record is housed in a plastic casing inside its own envelope. This offers a desirable way to store the records without fear of dust. Features of these sets are the inclusion of handsome booklets with musical analysis of the nine Beethoven symphonies by Sir Donald Francis Tovey, and a short essay on

(Continued on page 122)

DECCA'S Deutsche Grammophon "Archive Production"

▲SCAN the small print below. If it be naïveté to infer altruism in this splendid enterprise, the alternative must be that crass commerce has taken a long look at the recordings market and deemed it ready for adult merchandise. Whatever the genesis of the Decca-Deutsche Grammophon "Archive Production", the warmest praise is decidedly inadequate. The minor qualifications to be enumerated herewith are not intended to dilute the credit that belongs to those involved in this undertaking. Just imagine: upwards to a hundred discs that will be, in sum, a fair sample of music history from its beginnings to the dawning of the nineteenth century—the latter being chronologically the farthest remove to which the profit motive has extended our catalogues for the most part. Such worthy projects of old as *L'Anthologie Sonore* were as adventuresome as another Beethoven "Fifth" by comparison.

The reviewer may approach this embarrassment of riches from several directions. Space limitations precluding any exhaustive consideration, it would seem the most sensible procedure to treat with those performances that happen to be competitive in the usual manner, a blanket endorsement being assumed elsewhere unless otherwise noted. First, a few generalities as to the repertory layout and those

features of packaging and such that give the series a unique distinction. The overall scheme is didactic, hence of particular interest to schools, libraries, and all individuals amenable to systematic listening. The elapsed time represented is something over a thousand years, with a dozen arbitrarily fixed "research periods" ranging from Gregorian Chant to the doings in Mannheim and Vienna in the last four decades of the 1700s. The pressings are themselves imported, à la London and Angel, and of like quality—ininitely superior to what domestic Decca has given us until quite recently. Each of the sealed and pliofilm-enveloped jackets includes a card, 11¾ inches square, on which appears a reprint of the excellent annotations on the reverse of the sleeve, plus all texts in the language sung (albeit unaccountably without English translations), and such extra data as the edition used, its editor and publisher, place and date of composition, première, and the recording itself, duration, et cetera. In short, everything a student could want to know about the music. Presumably this card would be a boon to all, but it is atypical as to file size; one observer has said that it "strongly resembles Long Form 1040 and contains every possible bit of information except the temperature of the recording studio".

Musically, there are few grounds for complaint. As to the duplications, let us pass over the occasional overlapping that afflicts the collections. If it be a fact that the total contents of ARC 3002/4 are not new to LP, by far the preponderance emphatically is, and it would be picaresque to cavil at the exceptions. The *Lamento* on Vox has been withdrawn. Since the same fate will overtake that label's *Jephe* shortly, these latest versions will have to do for now. Hoengen's wobbly singing does a real disservice to Monteverdi, however, and the figured bass by Carl Orff (!) is open to musicological question to say the least. Interestingly, attention focuses on the third segment of this coupling, which features authentic contemporary instruments. Their sounds are not prepossessing, but where else could you hear a work of 1610 performed as it was in 1610? The REB version of Schuetz's magnificent *Musicalische Exequien* is less studied than the one on ARC 3005, and consequently more moving, but the new performance is much more handsomely recorded. As to *La Follia*, there have been so many that it needs only to be said that this latest is competent enough, for the other works on ARC 3008 are so lovely and Stich-Randall's voice so silvery that the disc is worth having for them alone. On past performance I was surprised, and delighted, by Lehmann's *Water Music*; without hesitation I am glad to proclaim its clear superiority in the field. The lone superfluity in the batch, it strikes me, is ARC 3012. Neumeyer's pianism is not extraordinary, and both works can be had in more compatible company. That he performs on an instrument once used by Mozart somewhat mitigates the artist's shortcomings, to be sure. —J.L.

(The following list at \$5.98 the disc.)

FIRST RESEARCH PERIOD: Gregorian Chant. Series B: The Mass; *Missa in Dominica Resurrectionis* (Easter Sunday Mass). Monks of the Benedictine Abbey of St. Martin, Beuron, P. D. Maurus Pfaff, O. S. B. (cond.); ARC-3001.

SECOND RESEARCH PERIOD: The Central Middle Ages. Series A: Troubadours, Trouveres and Minnesingers; HALLE: *Le jeu de Robin et Marion*; Series B: Music of the Minstrels. 13th Century Dances; Series C: Early Polyphony Before 1300; HALLE: *13 Rondeaux*. Pro Musica Antiqua of Brussels; ARC-3002.

THIRD RESEARCH PERIOD: The Early Renaissance. Series A: The Florentine Group; SQUARCIALUPI: *8 Madrigale e Caccie*; Series D: The Netherlanders to Okeghem; DUFAY: *5 Sacred Songs*. Pro Musica Antiqua of Brussels; ARC-3003.

FOURTH RESEARCH PERIOD: The High Renaissance. Series M: The Elizabethan Age; CAMPION: *Songs from "Philip Rosseter's Book of Ayres"*; DOWLAND: *Songs from the "Second Book of Songs or Ayres"*; MORLEY: *Little Short Songs from the "First Book of Ayres"*. Soames (tenor), Gerwig (lute), and Koch (viola da gamba); ARC-3004.

FIFTH RESEARCH PERIOD: The Italian Secento. Series B: MONTEVERDI: *Lamento d'Arianna* and *Sonata a 8 sopra "Sancta*

Maria ora pro nobis"; Series D: The Cantata; CARISSIMI: *Jephe*. Hoengen (contralto), Leitner and Reinhardt (harpichords) and Graeser (double bass); Ensemble and sopranos of St. Hedwig's Cathedral Choir, Carl Gorvin cond.; Feyerabend (tenor), Schwarzweller (soprano), instrumentalists and the Norddeutscher Singkreis, Gottfried Wolters (cond.); ARC-3005.

SIXTH RESEARCH PERIOD: German Baroque Music. Series A: SCHUETZ: *Musicalische Exequien*. Lindermeier and Seitz (sopranos), Michaelis (contralto), Brueckner-Rueggeberg and Gantner (tenors), Hanson and Proebstl (basses), Wiesmeier (organ), instrumentalists and the Heinrich-Schuetz-Choir of Munich, Karl Richter (cond.); ARC-3006.

SEVENTH RESEARCH PERIOD: Western Europe, 1650-1750. Series A: PURCELL: *15 Fantasies for 3-7 viols da gamba*. Wenzinger (treble gamba), Majer and Ulsamer (tenor gambas), Koch, Fluegel and Molzahn (bass gambas), and Mueller (treble, tenor and bass gambas); ARC-3007.

EIGHTH RESEARCH PERIOD: The Italian Settecento. Series B: The Neapolitan Group; A. SCARLATTI: *Su le sponde del Tevere*; Series D: The Solo and the Trio Sonata. CORELLI: *Sonata, Op. 5, No. 12 in D minor (La Follia)*; ARIOSTI: *Lesson V. Stich-Randall* (soprano). Wobisch (trumpet) and the Camerata Academica of the Salzburger Mozarteum, Bernhard Paum-

gartner (cond.); Grehling (violin), Wenzinger (cello) and Neumeyer (harpichord); Seiler (viola d'amore), Koch (viola da gamba), Gerwig (lute), and Glueckselig (harpichord); ARC-3008.

NINTH RESEARCH PERIOD: The Works of Johann Sebastian Bach. Series I: Chamber Music; *Three Sonatas for viola da gamba and harpichord*. Wenzinger (viola da gamba) and Neumeyer (harpichord); ARC-3009.

TENTH RESEARCH PERIOD: George Frederick Handel. Series A: Orchestral Concertos; *Water Music* (Concerto No. 25). Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Fritz Lehmann (cond.); ARC-3010.

ELEVENTH RESEARCH PERIOD: The German Pre-Classics. Series A: TELEMANN: *Der Schulmeister, Das Glueck, and Die Landlust* (complete cantatas). Guenter (baritone) with Goebel (harpichord) and the Boys' Choir of the Luebeck Schola Cantorum and Luebeck Chamber Orchestra, Fritz Stein (cond); and (for the latter two) Brueckmann (soprano) with Goebel and Haferland (cello) and Ermeler (flute); ARC-3011.

TWELFTH RESEARCH PERIOD: Mannheim and Vienna, 1760-1800. Series E: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart; *Piano Sonata No. 11 in A, K. 331; Piano Concerto No. 12 in A, K. 414*. Neumeyer (piano), and Scholz (forte-piano) with the Camerata Academica of the Salzburger Mozarteum, Bernhard Paumgartner (cond.); ARC-3012.

Notes and Reviews

THERE IS IN SOULS a sympathy with sounds, and as the mind is pitched the ear is pleased with melting airs or martial, brisk or grave; some chord in unison with what we hear is touched within us, and the heart replies.

—William Cowper

ORCHESTRA

ALBINONI: *Concertos a cinque in B flat and D minor, Op. 5, Nos. 1 and 7; Concertos for Oboe and Orchestra in B flat, D, F and C, Op. 7, Nos. 3, 6, 9 and 12; Pierre Pierlot (oboe) & L'Ensemble Orchestral de l'Oiseau-Lyre* conducted by Louis de Froment. Oiseau-Lyre OL-50041, \$4.98.

▲**TOMMASO ALBINONI**, born in Venice in 1671 and dying there in 1750, wrote numerous operas as well as a large quantity of instrumental music that was popular throughout the continent in the early 18th Century. His set of 12 *Concerti a cinque, Op. 5* were published in the city of his birth in 1707. They are five-part orchestral concertos for strings with a few brief solo passages. Like the classical concerto of a slightly later date, they are in three movements of alternating tempos. The *Concerti a cinque con oboe, Op. 7*, published in Amsterdam about 1716, consist of four concerti for strings alone, four for solo oboe and strings and four for two oboes and strings. These were among his most popular scores, for he composed a similar series (*Op. 9*) six years later. The present record contains the four solo oboe concertos of *Op. 7*, interspersed with two of the orchestral concerti of *Op. 5*.

The French ensemble has comparatively little variety and beauty of tone, but they are neat and efficient. There is undoubtedly more in these scores than is revealed by these instrumentalists. The oboe soloist, familiar from many French recordings, has a fine technique, but the music calls for a bit more variety and color than one finds in these performances. In recent months we have had the opportunity of hearing some Italian ensembles such as the Virtuosi di Roma and I Musici play works of this period. The present group, however splendid, is hardly in the same class. The recorded sound is generally fine, with excellent balance.

—R.R.

BARTOK: *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta*; the Philharmonic Promenade Orchestra of London conducted by Sir Adrian Boult. Westminster W-LAB 7021, \$7.50.

▲**AFTER** many years of solid but oh,

so staid dependability, Boult all at once has been shaping up as a podium personality of real stature. Only the dated Karajan conception of this modern masterwork so clearly limns its bold metrics and the contrapuntal grandeur of its sonic terraces. Price-wise the Kubelik version is more attractive, especially in that it is available with alternate couplings. But the Chicago Symphony was not then the virtuoso instrument that it is today and these London boys are topnotchers under the right conductor. The sound is on-par Westminster, which is better than almost anybody else's best.

—J.L.

BEETHOVEN: *Piano Concerto No. 4 in G, Op. 58*; Claudio Arrau (piano) with the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Alceo Galliera. Angel 35300, \$4.98 or \$3.48.

▲**ARRAU** is a first-class Beethoven interpreter and make no mistake, his persistent and unavailing dedication to the Romantics notwithstanding. It is a pity that his only representation in the large concerto discography is an off-day performance of the work preceding this one. Gieseeking and Schnabel have given us notable interpretations of the *G Major* but neither is hi-fi. The newly re-mastered Badura-Skoda is a sonic masterpiece and that gifted young man's most estimable achievement to date. Other versions are praiseworthy. Still, Arrau's at this moment seems to me a match for any. He is a German, musically, not a Latin, and he has lived a long time with this work. Long enough, I would say on the evidence, for his insights to have made peace with the surfeit of virtuosity that has been one of the troubles with his pianism. The last time I heard him play Romantic music in public the notes were all there but the spirit was totally missing. His way with Beethoven, however, gets better and better, and this *G Major* has a serene and lofty loveliness that is not obviated by a few liberties. Galliera's accompaniment is discreet. The sound is excellent, particularly as regards the presence of the solo instrument.

—J.L.

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67*; **SCHUBERT:** *Symphony No. 8 in B minor ("Unfinished")*;

the Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Charles Munch. RCA Victor LM-1923, \$3.98.

▲**THE** program might have been less generous if Munch had not cut out the repeat of the exposition in the opening movement of the *Fifth*—by which ambiguity I mean that if the performance had gone over to the "B" side the coupling might have been a shorter work than the *Unfinished*. Without reference to the excision, Munch's way with the Beethoven is otherwise thrilling but more Romantic than Classical, which is all right from one point of view. The Schubert is accomplished gently, perfectly, nowhere surcharged or overly spun out. The BSO in either case plays like the great orchestra it is. Magnificent sound.

—J.L.

BERLIOZ: *Symphonie Fantastique, Op. 14*; Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Igor Markevitch. Decca DL-9783, \$3.98.

▲**AS** released by Decca in this country, this issue has much to recommend it. Markevitch shows new facets of his talent every time out. This *Fantastique*, for example, if not the vessel of dramatic fire that Munch's is, displays tonal beauties becoming to its expression and a forward progress that moves the listener from point to point. The sound, however, is impressive—far from the Deutsche Grammophon release I heard some time ago. Here one is aware of the massive qualities so characteristic of the Berlin Philharmonic, and there is no lack of final clarity and definition as in the German pressing.

—C.J.L.

BRÄHMS: *Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98*; the Detroit Symphony Orchestra conducted by Paul Paray. Mercury MG-50057, \$3.98.

▲**THIS** is not just another performance. Depending on the strength of your own Brahmsian convictions, it will more likely impress as the best or the worst in the catalogues. The end movements in particular are heavy of accent, with the big brass obtruding in the finale as if the entire section were stage front and pointed right at you. Paray is *nonpareil* in certain departments of the standard repertory but his disrespect for all Brahms traditions is manifest and the straight-laced are forewarned to watch their blood pressure. As a "second" version, for use whenever one's interest in the work threatens to pall, this is strongly recommended. The sound is overwhelming.

—J.L.

BRUCH: *Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor, Op. 26*; **SIBELIUS:** *Violin Concerto in D minor, Op. 47*; Ivry Gitlis (violin) with the Pro Musica Orchestra of Vienna conducted by Jascha Horenstein. Vox PL-9660, \$4.98.

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▲**SYMPATHETIC** accompaniments. Full-bodied sound. Gitlis has a powerful bow arm and no end of thrust. His tone is not overpowering but it can be warm and compelling when he is on safe ground. So that the Bruch is lovingly sung and artfully shaped, and I would place it with the recommendable versions. Contrariwise, his Sibelius is infuriating for its admixture of unflagging vigor and imperfect intonation. The misses are all of them exceedingly close to the mark, but this is a knotty piece and it demands bull's eye solo work to make its points. The ancient Heifetz version has endured all competition; when will he re-do it?

—J.L.

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BRUCKNER: *Symphony No. 4 in E Flat* ("Romantic"); **WAGNER:** *Siegfried Idyll*; the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Hans Knappertsbusch. London set LL 1250/1, \$7.96.

BRUCKNER: *Symphony No. 8 in C minor*; the Pro Musica Symphony of Vienna conducted by Jascha Horenstein. Vox set PL-9682, two discs, \$9.96.

▲**SOON** the long-suffering Brucknerites will have no grounds for complaint. There have been several LP versions of the *Romantic* already, and the *C minor* will be with us again on Epic in a matter of weeks. It is my best recollection that the *Urtext* was used for all other extant performances of the earlier work, but I will not swear to this because there is everlasting confusion as between the "original version" and the "very first version" of any Bruckner symphony. In any event, now comes Knappertsbusch with the finest performance *per se*, and the cleanest recording, but the true believers will not forgive him for choosing what I take to be the posthumous Loewe edition. Peter Heyworth's highly readable notes do not confirm or dispel this suspicion. The coupled *Siegfried Idyll* is astonishingly listless and otherwise a far cry from the Toscanini and Furtwaengler exemplars, although beautifully engineered. Horenstein's revelation of the *Eighth* is even more of a success than was his recent *Ninth*, which amounts to high praise. Again, however, there are no less than four versions—the unpublished autograph and three subsequent editions—of this wonderful work. Horenstein elects the 1890 version, which was published only last year, and I must say that Joseph Braunstein's splendid annotations establish the efficacy of this choice. Happily, Horenstein's performance needs no musical advocacy; to these ears it is one of the most winning statements of the Bruckner esthetic on records today. More's the pity that its 76 minutes sprawl across four sides. Three would have sufficed easily, albeit not without mid-movement breaks. Sonorous sound.—J.L.

CHOPIN: (arr. Leroy Anderson and Peter Bodge): *Les Sylphides*; **J. STRAUSS** (arr. Antal Dorati): *Graduation Ball*; the Boston Pops Orchestra conducted by Arthur Fiedler. RCA Victor LM-1919, \$3.98.

▲**IF** the Messrs. Anderson and Bodge would not take offense, we might inquire by what right they include in their sequence a certain waltz (the one in F minor from *Op. 69*) that has not been identified with *Sylphides* elsewhere? Heaven knows that there have been enough versions of this music (by Stravinsky, Tchechrepnin, Liadov, Rieti, Caillet, Gretchaninov and Britten among others) so that somewhere along the line there may be precedence for this temerity, which would be otherwise grounds for disqualification. The program notes (by Robert Lawrence, who knows his ballet) do not let on that anything is amiss. Perhaps nothing is. I'm just raising the question because *aficionados* are bound to; others will not object to the dividend. The Anderson-Bodge arrangement is expert, although rather more *à la* Kostelanetz than seems propitious. A virtuoso performance. Likewise for Dorati's collation from lesser Strauss, which is a natural for the full Pops treatment. But again, balletomanes beware, this time because the score is abridged! Stunning sound on both sides.

—J.L.

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DEBUSSY: *La Mer*; *Nocturnes*; Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Pierre Monteux with Women of the Berkshire Festival Chorus in the third Nocturne. RCA Victor LM-1939, \$3.98.

▲**HERE** is a most beguiling performance of Debussy's impressionistic evocation of the sea by a conductor who, like all too few now living, had the privilege of discussing with the composer his interpretative intentions. The delicacy and balance of Monteux's performance, the subtle mingling of rhythms (especially in the "Play of the Waves"), and the shifting changes of coloration that he achieves conjure a vision of the dreamlike sea that surely Debussy had in mind. There is not the urgent compulsion of the late Koussevitzky's remembered version with this same orchestra, nor the intensity of Toscanini's more radiantly eloquent performance with another virtuoso orchestra, but there is an evocative imagery in Monteux's vivid expressiveness. Monteux's dynamic gradations are wonderfully preserved in the record, which offers a type of realism true to the concert hall but not always faithfully preserved for home listeners.

Equally impressive is Monteux's performance of the *Nocturnes*, with its tonal and poetic beauty. Only Ansermet competes with Monteux in this score for faithful observance of the composer's directions, but reproductively Monteux has been better served. Nevertheless,

anyone who has lived with Ansermet's version might well be unwilling to part with it. There is always room for more than one version of these tableaux if one's purse permits duplications. Couplings, of course, may govern one's choice of competitive versions.
—P.H.R.

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DELIBES: *Sylvia* and *Coppélia Ballet Suites*; Members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Pierre Monteux. RCA Victor LM-1913, \$3.98.

▲**THIS** recording was previously issued in RCA Victor's omnibus of Ballet Music (set LM-6113). While that set was a magnet for the ballet *aficionado* it contained several items available already on separate discs and, since this was the best performances of Delibes' ballet suites on LP, it was regrettable that one had to buy the entire set to acquire these performances. Of course, one reasoned RCA Victor eventually would release these memorable associations of Monteux with the Boston Symphony Orchestra (he would not have achieved such fine results in San Francisco) but one hoped the event might happen earlier. Early or late, this disc is welcome, and I know many record buyers are going to be as delighted with its release as your reporter.
—P.H.R.

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HAYDN: *Symphony No. 96 in D (Miracle)*; *Symphony No. 102 in B flat*; Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York conducted by Bruno Walter. Columbia ML-5059, \$3.98.

▲**BRUNO WALTER** has always held Haydn in high esteem. There is nothing stuffy about this Haydn; he performs the composer's music with an appropriately healthy vigor and quite a bit of old world charm, for he endows its melodic lines with more nuances and subtleties than most. His performance of *No. 96* is as winning as any on LP; it has a sparkle and life that even Scherchen does not realize. In *No. 102*, he is equally successful and more emotionally stirring than Scherchen, who is his chief rival. The recording is exceptionally clear, despite a boomy bass, and I particularly liked the clarity of the woodwinds.
—P.H.R.

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HONEGGER: *Symphonie Liturgique*; *Chant de Joie*; the Paris Conservatory Orchestra conducted by Robert F. Denzler. London LL-1296, \$3.98.

▲**WHEN** the first LP recording of this work was issued by Urania in September of 1953, our reviewer—Donald Ritchie (now residing in Japan)—was so displeased with the performance that he could not find any kind words for the work. It is a turbulent and dissonant work, reminiscent in part of earlier compositions. To be sure it is repetitious but it can hardly be called dull. Written in 1945-46, this symphony is marked by the effects of the

war upon its composer in its three movements which Honegger finds "the symphonic equivalent of three episodes in the Requiem Mass." I am rather inclined to concur with Virgil Thomson on the merits or demerits, as you wish, of this symphony. He said: "If the harmonic and orchestral seeming complexity is a little bit, with regard to the thematic, the melodic content, like sauce cooking that conceals the poverty of the basic food materials, the result is tasty all the same. The work is both meritorious and masterful, and it is interesting to listen to. It is a shade theatrical in the sense of the obvious." Robert Denzler succeeds in making this symphony more interesting than his German predecessor and London honors his performance reproductively in a way to put the former release to shame. *Chant de joie* is an earlier work of Honegger's, a pleasant diversion suggesting the joy found in a pastoral scene.

—P.H.R.

KHACHATURIAN: *Violin Concerto*; David Oistrakh and the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Aram Khachaturian. Angel 35244, \$4.98 or \$3.48.

▲NOT so long ago, we had Igor Oistrakh's performance of this work. Igor is the talented son of David and he really does not deserve this competition from his father, who unquestionably is the more mature artist. To add salt to the wound, the father has the services of the composer as conductor, though frankly I do not think that Aram Khachaturian is a better conductor than Eugene Goossens, who officiated in the Igor Oistrakh version. In both cases, the Philharmonia Orchestra was used, and some wise souls might have a word or two in regard to its responsiveness to the two conductors. Of course, Papa Oistrakh is in the limelight at present, having played in this country and received great homage, so this performance made in England recently will please his admirers since it is infinitely better in sound than the three performances that the noted violinist made in Russia. The Colosseum version of Messrs. Oistrakh and Khachaturian is a poor substitute for this one, and Gauk is not the equal of the composer in his direction of the orchestras involved in the other two releases. All things added together, those who admire the concerto will probably find the magnet drawing them to this latest issue. It is a brilliant performance, but so too was Igor's.

—P.H.R.

KODALY: *Galanta Dances; Marosszék Dances*; Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra of London conducted by Artur Rodzinski. Westminster Laboratory Series W-LAB 7020, \$7.50.

▲THESE two sets of dances are derived from folk material which was freely treated by the composer. They are strikingly nationalistic in spirit and, like

the nationalistic dances of Dvorak and others, afford a type of welcome diversion both in the concert hall and on records. The skillful orchestral treatment of Kodaly is markedly brought out in the brilliant reproduction. Rodzinski has a flair for this type of music, but I am sure that the music is as close to his heart as it is to Fricsay's, who has recorded both sets. However, Rodzinski has been much better served by the recording engineers than was Fricsay.

—P.H.R.

LISZT: *A Faust Symphony; Les Préludes*; the Paris Conservatory Orchestra and the Swiss Romande Orchestra conducted by Ataulfo Argenta. London LL-1303/04, \$7.96.

▲LISZT was not the man for a true symphony, and his *Faust Symphony* is more in the nature of three tone poems or "character studies"—based on the three main protagonists, Faust, Marguerite and Mephistopheles. There are two endings to this work, one with a tenor soloist and chorus, the other without. Liszt's score allows for either to be used. The expense of tenor solo and chorus has probably resulted in the symphony being performed more often than not as we hear it here. It is generally conceded that the second section of this score, dealing with Marguerite or Gretchen, is the best part, but I have always found the last section, dealing with Mephistopheles, quite diverting. The main trouble, if one admits trouble, with each section is they are somewhat lengthy and each seems to halt and go. It takes a conductor who has innate admiration for romanticism, and one who finds subtle transitions in its varying moods, to do justice to this score. It also takes patience. You cannot hurry the music or push it; it should move as its composer directed it to move as all music should. Ataulfo Argenta, a Spaniard with a distinctive flair for performing the music of his countrymen, proves himself equally successful in the romantic clime. Time is no barrier; he transports himself and his listeners back to the days of Liszt, performing this work with expressive ardor and infinite subtleties. One listens and is won, for the time being, by the conductor's amazing musicianship and, in the end, though a protest has previously registered itself against another *Les Préludes*, one is won by his expressive treatment of the tone poem. Both works are splendidly recorded and both orchestras respond to a man to the directions of the conductor, but it seems to me the most beautiful sounds are heard from Ansermet's Swiss Romande Orchestra.

—P.H.R.

LISZT: *Hungarian Fantasia; Totentanz*; Edith Farnardi (piano), Philharmonic Promenade Orchestra conducted by Sir Adrian Boult. Westminster Laboratory Series W-LAB 7018, \$7.50.

▲IN THE *Hungarian Fantasia*, Miss Farnardi is most pleasing, for the Hungarian melodies which Liszt used in this composition are ones with which she is by birth familiar. Others have given more forceful performances—Solomon, for example, in one of the most electrifying recordings of the last days of 78-rpm discs, though neither he nor his conductor, Susskind, had the true feel of the Hungarian idiom. All the same that was quite a performance. Anda does well with this work but Ackermann is not the ideal mate for the conductor. At the beginning of the present performance, Boult seems less suited to the idiom, but once Miss Farnardi takes over there is almost perfect rapport between them. For an English conductor to achieve this transition suggests heedful cooperation with his soloist, who could probably sing all the melodies in the right manner for him. The crystal clear piano reproduction results in some exquisite sounds from that instrument as the gifted pianist performs the melodic elaborations of Liszt with true suggestion of her heart being in the performance. The *Totentanz* is done justice to by Miss Farnardi and Sir Adrian, and they are of a single mind in its performance. But, for all her pianistic prowess, this is a score which suggests the masculine touch; its gloomy characteristics derived from the old *Dies irae*, its medieval atmosphere and its final dance of dance evoke the force and fervor of a man. Brailowsky has given us the best performance to date on LP with the highly competent Reiner, but this version is no longer an eventful recording. Jacquinot and Fistoulari challenge this performance but not too seriously since the quality of the reproduction is not quite as brilliant as this release.

—P.H.R.

MOZART: *Violin Concertos No. 4 in D, K. 218 and No. 5 in A, K. 219*; Mischa Elman (violin) with the New Symphony Orchestra of London conducted by Josef Krips. London LL-1271, \$3.98.

▲KRIPS elicits lovely playing from the Londoners. The sound is spacious within the prescribed Mozartian frame. Elman uses the Joachim cadenzas, hits no wrong notes, and informs both works with that special lusciousness of tone to which a large audience has paid unquestioning homage for long years. In 1956 it may smack of irreverence to play Mozart as if he were Wieniawski, but this artist has been steadfastly immune to stylistic imperatives and there is no point in caviling at the very foible that contains the secret of his success. In sum, much fancy fiddling, little Mozart.

—J.L.

MUSSORGSKY-RAVEL: *Pictures at an Exhibition*; **WAGNER:** *Siegfried Idyll*; the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Igor Markevitch. Decca DL-9782, \$3.98.

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The Philadelphia Orchestra/Eugene Ormandy

MUSSORGSKY-RAVEL: *Pictures at an Exhibition*; the Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra of London conducted by Artur Rodzinski. Westminster W-LAB-7019, \$7.50.

▲BOTH Markevitch and Rodzinski own something that Toscanini does not, and that is an insight into the wry essence of class-conscious East European wit as evidenced in the sixth of Mussorgsky's tableaux. Elsewhere, interpretative values being approximately equal, the points of comparison are execution *per se* and sonics. The brilliant Markevitch coaxes an exceedingly sensitive performance from the Berliners. Rodzinski's generally less nuanced traversal has been more excitingly engineered. The Decca coupling is seraphically played. It is also a little short on sentiment. I continue to prefer Toscanini's revelation, which is likewise but perfectly turned out, or Furtwaengler's, which is the ultimate in everything but sheer execution. —J.L.

PERGOLESI: *String Concertinos, Nos. 1-6; Sonata in B flat* ("in stile di concerto"); *Sinfonia in F* for cello and strings; Roberto Michelucci (violin), Enzo Altobelli (cello) and other members of I Musici. Angel set 3538-B, \$9.96, or discs 35251/2, \$6.96.

PERGOLESI: *Concertino (No. 1) in G; DURANTE:* *Divertimento in F minor; VIVALDI:* *Concerto in G minor* for two cellos and orchestra; Michel Tournus and G. Fleury (cellos, the former in the Pergolesi) with the Orchestre de Chambre Gérard Cartigny. London/Ducret-Thomson DTL-93044, \$4.98.

▲THE French group eschews any sort of continuo, and I fail to discern in its performances any commensurate restitution. Listen to the Virtuosi di Roma version of the Vivaldi and you will be able to get along without this one. The same group has essayed a Durante concerto that is every bit as worthy a work as the present divertimento, which is unfortunately not elsewhere available. As to the Pergolesi, you must first decide whether or not you incline to the full orchestral treatment, which Ephrikan provides for four of the six concertinos on a recently re-mastered Westminster disc. If not, acquire the Angel album by all means. I have heard I Musici ("The Musicians") several times in concert, and I say without hesitation that no other dozenish-sized ensemble in the world comes so close to perfection (unless it be the Zimble Sinfonietta in non-Italian repertory). It would be impossible at this stage of scientific development to capture its unbelievably pure tone, but the approximation of it herewith will do nicely. Excepting the concerted sonata, all of the Pergolesi played by I Musici was much edited by Barbara Giuranna, which may or may not offend students of the period. I cannot find it in my heart

to register the slightest objection when the results are of this high order. —J.L.

PHILHARMONIA POP CONCERT: *Skaters Waltz* (Waldteufel), *Light Cavalry Overture* (Suppé), *Radetzky March* (Strauss, Sr.), *Thunder and Lightning Polka* and *Tritsch-Tratsch Polka* (Strauss, Jr.), *Polka from Schwanda* (Weinberger), *Orpheus in Hades Overture* (Offenbach), *Espana* (Chabrier), and *Marche joyeuse* (Chabrier); the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Herbert von Karajan. Angel 35327, \$4.98 or \$3.48.

▲THE charmingly *chi-chi* back liner essay by Leo Lerman of *Mademoiselle* is not the least of the reasons for keeping this disc handy. Karajan has escaped any accusation of *Gemuetlich* propensities and properly so, as witness his heartless *Fledermaus*, but these miniatures are fine show pieces for his superb orchestra and he seems to have been content to let it have the day. The consequences will not displease, especially if the listening and reading times involved come out about the same. Bright sound. —J.L.

PROKOVIEV: *Symphony No. 1 (Classical) Op. 25; Love for Three Oranges Suite, Op. 33a*; Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra of London conducted by Artur Rodzinski. Westminster Laboratory Series W-LAB 7017, \$7.50.

▲THE clarity of detail and the consistent fidelity of the sound throughout each work is, as usual, the main attribute of these recordings. Comparing attributes of sound, I find the recent Ansermet version of the symphony richer in string quality, if less bright in tonal quality. In the suite, no one has achieved a similar brightness of sound, something which remains more effective in this music than the symphony. Rodzinski's performance of the symphony lacks humor in the opening movement. He is more successful in the second and fourth movements than elsewhere. The music of the *Love for Three Oranges* is mostly melodramatic and Rodzinski's taut direction is most efficient in these parts, however, his handling of the one slow section—"The Prince and the Princess"—is well contrived with avoidance of undue sentiment. Of the various recordings of this music, I am especially attached to the Désormière version, and this one remains a challenge to Rodzinski's. Those who favor the Laboratory Series and who have the equipment to do them full justice will undeniably want to make their own comparisons. —P.H.R.

RACHMANINOV: *Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor, Op. 18; Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Op. 43*; Orazio Frugoni (piano) with the Pro Musica Orchestra of Vienna conducted by Harold Byrns. Vox PL-9650, \$4.98.

▲THE bargain aspects of this issue are not to be gainsaid; note that no other version of the concerto is coupled with another major work. Sonically, both sides are satisfactory. Neither performance is outstanding, but then nobody ever could ride these warhorses as the old man used to with the Philadelphians. Frugoni is an able if not a penetrating pianist, and his collaboration with Byrns is on the whole quite successful. There are affections in the *Rhapsody* that seemed to me untoward, but nothing too serious. —J.L.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: *Schéhérazade*; the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra conducted by William Steinberg. Capitol P-8305, \$3.98.

▲AN exquisitely articulated performance, very hi in fi. Steinberg is perhaps our most painstaking orchestral craftsman. Even his raging seas are every moment under control, but they rage very realistically just the same. And the more lyrical moments are alive with lilt or lushness as indicated. An ideal representation, wholly recommended. —J.L.

SULLIVAN: *Music to Shakespeare's Tempest; Incidental Music to Henry VIII*; Patricia Brinton (soprano), in the former, and the Vienna Orchestral Society conducted by F. Charles Adler. Unicorn UNLP-1014, \$3.98.

▲THE *Tempest* score is the earliest extant work by Sir Arthur Seymour Sullivan (1942-1900), whose partnership with the lyricist Sir William Schwenk Gilbert was one day to make history. The music dates from 1860, long before Sullivan attained to fame and fortune in the popular theater. He never would have acquired it elsewhere, if one may judge fairly from this evidence. The snippets from his *Henry VIII* score, which dates from the seventies, might have come straight out of the contemporaneous *H. M. S. Pinafore*. Savoyards will be grateful to Unicorn for its enterprise. Others will not detain themselves with these palatable but amazingly non-protein curios. The versatile Adler presents them in the best possible light, we may be sure on his past performance with off-beat works. True, one would have liked more conviction on the part of the soprano, but she doesn't have much of a challenge to hurl herself at. The sound is excellent. —J.L.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Symphony No. 4 in F minor, Op. 36*; the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Columbia ML-5074, \$3.98.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 64*; the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York conducted by Dimitri Mitropoulos. Columbia ML-5075, \$3.98.

▲THE *Fourth* makes a brilliant showcase for Ormandy's magnificent orchestra, but his conception of the score puzzles me, particularly because he has always shown such insight into the *Pathétique*. With the earlier work he feels no tension, even lets it sag sometimes. One infers that the conductor has thought the score through, because many liberties are taken and Ormandy usually rides a warhorse right down the middle of the road. Still, what comes across is a disinterest compounded by caprice. For the money, the Mitropoulos *Fifth* is more desirable than most. He, too, takes his quota of liberties and then some, especially in the slow movement, but withal this symphony is one of the few in the standard repertory that excite him and he gives it his all, which is considerable. The Philharmonic apparently feels less strongly about it than their boss does because the ensemble is occasionally imperfect, although not often enough to cause more than passing irritation. Recommended. Both recordings are brilliantly sonorous. —J.L.

CHAMBER MUSIC

BEETHOVEN: *Sonatas for Cello and Piano, Opp. 5, 69, 102* (complete); *Variations on a Theme from Handel's "Judas Maccabeus"*; *Variations on a Theme from Mozart's "Ein Maedchen"*; *Variations on a Theme from Mozart's "Bei maennern"*; Gregor Piatigorsky (cello) with Solomon (piano), in the sonatas) and Lukas Foss (piano). RCA Victor set LM-6120, 3 discs, \$11.94.

▲THE Casals-Serkin collaboration was a landmark of the phonographic art but admittedly their sovereign music-making left much for the average listener to desire. The recording was not a sonic triumph. Casals hummed along with himself, which is his wont. Serkin was inclined to be elaborately deferent. Surely the competitive Starker-Bogin version of the sonatas has the most exciting celloistics, but the pianist is rather too obsequious. The new Victor album strikes a happy medium: The performances are musically, with techniques and temperaments alike nicely balanced or contrasted. The sound is the best. Also, all of the variation sets are included, so that this issue contains everything that Beethoven ever wrote for cello and piano. Piatigorsky's tone deepens with the years. His approach is anything but intellectual, but the emotional intensity of it goes equally well with Solomon's buttoned elegance and the careful crispness of the multi-talented young Lukas Foss. All things considered, this release offers the most nearly even distribution of assets and liabilities in the field. —J.L.

BRAHMS: *Sonatas for Cello and Piano in E minor, Op. 38 and in F major, Op. 99*;

Pierre Fournier (cello) and Wilhelm Backhaus (piano). London LL-1264, \$3.98.

BRAHMS: *Sonatas for Clarinet and Piano in F minor, Op. 120, No. 1 and in E flat major, Op. 120, No. 2*; Reginald Kell (clarinet) and Joel Rosen (piano). Decca DL-9629, \$3.98.

BRAHMS: *Sonatas for Viola and Piano in F minor, Op. 120, No. 1 and in E flat major, Op. 120, No. 2*; Paul Doktor (viola) and Nadia Reisenberg (piano). Westminster WN- or SWN-18114, \$4.98 or \$3.98.

▲BRAHMS was aware of the problems of the relationship between the cello and the piano, but unfortunately recording companies usually have not been, for seldom in recent years has a first-rate pianist undertaken these Cello Sonatas. Not until the present release has there been a really satisfactory version of the piano parts of these works. True, we have had some fine performances, notably by Janos Starker, but those tremendous readings must give way to the eloquent and stirring renditions by Fournier and Backhaus. The splendid balance and lyric quality is most noticeable in the *Sonata in F, Op. 99*, one of the most mature and confident of the composer's chamber works. The grave and sober *Adagio*, with its eloquent writing for the cello and piano is most appealing. The recorded sound is splendid, with the piano more forward and better balanced than in previous versions.

Reginald Kell's new versions of the *Sonatas, Op. 120* are generally superior to the set made some years ago for Mercury. They are played with classic reserve and elegance rather than with the Viennese warmth and romanticism of Leopold Wlach or the thinner, refined French tone of Jacques Lancelot. Joel Rosen, the pianist, is a native of Cleveland and a graduate of Juilliard School of Music. His playing reveals an imaginative, eloquent chamber music performer. The recording slightly favors the clarinet at the expense of the piano, but in general the balance is satisfactory.

These sonatas were written for Richard Muehlfeld, for whom Brahms had previously written the *Clarinet Trio, Op. 114* and the *Clarinet Quintet, Op. 115*. However, they were conceived for the viola as well as the clarinet, and were published in alternate versions. It is only in fairly recent times that they have begun to be appreciated in their viola settings, since there have been few violists of the same calibre as Muehlfeld. After the turn of the century, Lionel Tertis championed these works as has William Primrose in more recent years. This seems to be the first time they have been recorded on the viola since the advent of LP. Paul Doktor has a light tone, as well as a solid technique, and gives a reserved, tonally

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attractive reading. Nadia Reisenberg's fine musicianship is an added element to this welcome release. The recording, made in Westminster's New York studio, is a model of tonal balance. —R.R.

DEBUSSY: *Quartet in G minor, Op. 10*; RAVEL: *Quartet in F*; Curtis String Quartet. Westminster WN- or SWN-18049, \$4.98 or \$3.98.

▲THE Curtis String Quartet gives competent performances of two of the most popular and familiar works in the French repertoire. The ensemble, however, faces stiff competition with this particular coupling as the earlier versions by the Budapest and Stuyvesant Quartets have long been admired, despite the fact that neither enjoys the splendid, open sound of the present group. These works demand elegance and refinement, polish and understanding, attributes which the Curtis Quartet are well aware of in these performances, though the degree of such qualities may be debatable among listeners who make extensive comparisons. The youthful vigor of the Curtis group in the faster movements is most attractive, which makes their performances, in my estimation, among the finest currently available. None of the ensembles mentioned are French players and those of us who remember the performances of these works by the old Pro Arte Quartet still

feel that the latter ensemble evidenced a more complete rapport with the composers.

In the case of the Ravel, the Pascal Quartet (Concert Hall 1123) are closer to the heart of Ravel but the recording unfortunately is poor. For those who favor tape, the performances by the Stuyvesant Quartet were recently made available by Phonotapes Sonore (PM-103) in which the reproductive quality is considerably clearer and dynamically better defined with a richer manifestation of the quality and character of the four instruments. If a remake of the LP could be made to approximate the quality of the tape reproduction undoubtedly the Stuyvesant performances would be the stronger challengers in the field. —R.R.

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MOZART: *Quartet in D, K. 155; Quartet in G, K. 156; Quartet in C, K. 157; Quartet in F, K. 158;* New Music Quartet. Columbia LP ML-5003, \$3.98. **THE SAME WORKS:** Barylli Quartet. Westminster WN- or SWN-18053, \$4.98 or \$3.98.

▲THESE new recordings of four early Mozart quartets provide interesting contrasts and similarities. The Barylli ensemble is clean, well-balanced with a bright tone and incisive rhythm. The New Music Quartet, also well-balanced and crisp, tends to faster tempi and generally lighter interpretations. The realistic Westminster recording accentuates an occasional roughness in Barylli's first violin, while the splendid Columbia sound shows the superb, almost glassy perfection of the New Music Quartet. Earlier performances are superseded by either of these splendid releases. —R.R.

•
MOZART: *The Last Quartets: No. 20 in D, K. 499; No. 21 in D, K. 575; No. 22 in B flat, K. 589; No. 23 in F, K. 590;* The Budapest String Quartet. Columbia set SL-228, 2 discs, \$7.96.

▲SINCE recording the six quartets dedicated to Haydn, the Budapest ensemble has made a change in personnel: Edwin Schneider has returned to the desk of second violin replacing Jac Gorodetzky, who proved himself an equally proficient performer. Of course, the change makes no difference in the character or quality of the ensemble's playing, for Schneider is virtually a member of the Budapest family. One can assume that he has abandoned his own string quartet, which is a pity for the group did some fine work in its later Haydn quartet recordings. Few will quibble with the Budapest interpretations of these last quartets of Mozart; the smooth ensemble work and the refinement of the playing has not been bettered by any other foursome. Yet, I find myself still preferring the Stuyvesant Quartet's performances of *K. 499* and *K. 575*. The opening movements of both works, marked *Allegretto*, are played on the slow side by the Budapest group. The Stuyvesants

emphasize their rhythmic impulse better by their chosen timing of these movements. In *K. 575*, the timing of the latter ensemble sustains my interest best in both the first and second movements. While the Budapests perform the *Andante* with an unassailable musical aristocracy, the Stuyvesants brace the music better. And there is more buoyance in the latter's minuet and finale. As for the performances of *K. 589* and *K. 590*, no other ensemble that I have heard excels over these to provoke detailed comparisons. The recording here is excellent but lacking some of the room resonance in the equally fine recording of the Stuyvesants (Philharmonia 105)—the coloration of the Budapest strings is darker hued, more like burnished copper than the sunlit glow of the Stuyvesants. For subtlety of nuance, the Budapests are almost unexcelled, and it is this particular gift, revealing a rarely defined unity in purpose, that stands them apart from all other quartets. But sometimes, I wish that they would dig into the music a little more forcefully; the velvet glove is admirable for many occasions but not for all. —P.H.R.

KEYBOARD

BACH: *Fantasia and Fugue in G minor;* **VIVALDI-BACH:** *Concerto in D minor;* **LISZT:** *Prelude and Fugue on BACH;* **BINGHAM:** *Roulade;* **LANGLAIS:** *Nativite;* **ZECHIEL:** *Chorale-Prelude;* Harold Ash (organ). McIntosh MC-1005, \$4.45.

▲THE ATTRACTIONS of this well recorded disc are the fine, clear organ sound of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington, the intelligent if unincisive playing of Harold Ash, and a thoughtfully chosen program. If it is glowing performance of this music you are looking for, you will doubtless pass this disc by, for Ash does not have much temperament and his work contains little excitement. —C.J.L.

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BEETHOVEN: *Sonata No. 8 in C minor, Op. 13 ("Pathétique"); Sonata No. 14 in C sharp minor, Op. 27, No. 2 ("Moonlight");* Rudolf Firkusny (piano). Capitol P-8322, \$3.98.

▲THIS is Firkusny's first record for Capitol, and it may very well be the best he has ever made. His performances of these familiar sonatas are among the best of many splendid versions available, and they are recorded with unusual distinctness and spaciousness. Capitol has added a fine artist to its roster; let us hope that they will give us fresher repertory for his next release. —C.J.L.

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BEETHOVEN: *Sonata No. 23 in F minor, Op. 57; Sonata No. 32 in C minor, Op. 111;* London LL-1233, \$3.98.

MOZART: *Sonata No. 11 in A, K. 331; Sonata No. 13 in B flat, K. 333;*

Sonata No. 15 in C, K. 545; London LL-1164, \$3.98. Julius Katchen (piano).

▲THESE two new discs represent a forward stride in the development of Julius Katchen, the American-born pianist who is making a career on the other side of the Atlantic. Most impressive of all is his performance of the *Appassionata*, which compares favorably with those in the top category. It is sensitive, dramatic, well proportioned. Also impressive is the first movement of the great *Op. 111* sonata. The final movement does not yet hold together. The tempos employed for several of the variations mitigate against the contrast one wants between the meditative calm of the opening and closing sections and the outspoken emotion of the middle variations. Katchen's playing of Mozart is warm-toned and deft, but there is not quite the sharpness of inflection and the sparkle required from time to time. Still, this is respectable work that can give pleasure—specially with such beautifully recorded sound. —C.J.L.

KEYBOARD MUSIC OF BACH AND

HIS SONS: *Fantasia Rondo in C minor (BWV Anh. 86); Aria variata alla maniera italiana in A minor (BWV 989) (J. S. Bach); Rondo in G and Sonata in E minor (C. P. E. Bach); Fugues in D minor and E flat; Polonaise in F (W. F. Bach);* Ruggero Gerlin (harpsichord & piano). Oiseau-Lyre LP OL-50097, \$4.98.

▲A NUMBER of works of varying degrees of authenticity have been preserved under the name of Johann Sebastian Bach. The present *Fantasia* (No. 86 in the Anhang of Wolfgang Schmieder's thematic index of Bach's works) is a spirited work that might possibly be from the master's pen. In any event, the present performance makes one almost believe that it should be among the authentic scores. The *Aria variata* was probably written in 1709, preceding Bach's only other work in this form, the famous *Goldberg Variations*, by some 30 years. It is an effective work that vividly displays the technique of the performer. Both works are performed on the harpsichord.

The other selections, played on the piano, include a tremendous fantasia-like *Rondo in G*, brimming with emotion, by Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, as well as an *E minor Sonata* (the first of the fifth collection of clavier sonatas published in 1785), a more modest though no less interesting score. Two *Fugues* and a *Polonaise* by Wilhelm Friedemann Bach provide interesting examples of the work of Johann Sebastian's eldest son. Very little is of the latter's music currently available, so we welcome these spirited and tonally attractive performances. M. Gerlin is at home at the keyboard of the piano as well as the harpsichord. The sound is realistic throughout. —R.R.

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CHOPIN: *3 Polonaises, 8 Mazurkas;* Witold Malcuzyński (piano). Angel 35284, \$4.98 or \$3.48.

▲**MALCUZYNSKI** has so much skill, temperament, and imagination that it is all the more exasperating that he is so willful and mannered in pulling phrases out of shape, in employing arbitrary tempo rubato, and in general destroying any kind of feeling of continuity. This is an old story, as most will agree, but it really is a pity that Malcuzyński cannot give as much satisfaction as one feels he should be able to provide. Excellent piano recording. —C.J.L.

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MOZART: *Sonata in A, K. 331; Fantasia in C minor, K. 475; Sonata in C minor, K. 457;* Paul Badura-Skoda (Mozart piano). Westminster LP WN- or SWN-18028, \$4.98 or \$3.98.

▲**THE LATEST** in the series of Mozart recordings made on the Mozart piano in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna consists of three of the most familiar and greatest Mozart scores. Unfortunately, they are not an unqualified success. The instrument buzzes and twangs at times, and the bass is rather unclear. The young pianist plays these works more persuasively, and because of the quality of the instrument, more successfully on a modern piano (WL-5317). The sound here is all too clear and revealing. It is interesting to compare the sound of this piano with that used in Fritz Neumeyer on the Deutsche Grammophon Archive series. The latter also plays the *Sonata in A, K. 331*, but with more finesse and elegance. —R.R.

•
RACHMANINOV: *Sonata for Piano No. 1 in D minor, Op. 28;* Warren Perry Thew. MGM E3247, \$3.98.

▲**WHAT** prompted MGM to take this recording over from the Rachmaninov Society, one can hardly imagine, unless it was with the idea of bettering the reproduction, which it has. However, the real feature of the original Society release was the singing of a Russian folk song, *Paint and Powder*, by the diseuse Nadejda Plevitskaya, whom the composer accompanied. True, the latter was taken from an old recording, but none the less it was worth the price of the entire record. Thew is not the pianist to do justice to this sonata. As our colleague Harold C. Schonberg has said in his recent book, "the music needs a bigger, more imaginative pianist, and also a more secure technician." —P.H.R.

•
REUBKE: *Sonata on the 94th Psalm;* **FRANCK:** *Grande pièce symphonique;* Virgil Fox (organ). RCA Vicotr LM-1917, \$3.98.

▲**WHEN** the Biggs performance of the Reubke appeared two years ago it was generally acknowledged to be the hi-fiest

organ sound on records. But something was wrong; either the Methuen monster was too big to be contained or Biggs simply overdid because the artistic results as distinct from the sonic were no great shakes. Fox does not resolve this dilemma. However, his version handily supplants the competition. A far more dramatic performer and rather more of a virtuoso than any of the several contenders, he had the further advantages of a supremely phonogenic instrument (the organ of the John Hays Hammond Museum at Gloucester, Massachusetts) and all of RCA Victor's accumulative experience with the "New Orthophonic" characteristic (which is by now well in hand). None of this, of course, can make the fustian Reubke piece more than it is, but the Fox magic is momentarily quite persuasive. That applies in a more restricted sense to the Franck, which Fox takes loud and fast. He thereby focuses attention on its protraction of materials instead of losing himself in the mysticism—a double disservice to Franck, but noble in its unfoldment for all of that. —J.L.

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SCHUMANN: *Davidshuendler Dances, Op. 6; Sonata No. 3 in F minor, Op. 14;* Friedrich Wuehrer (piano). Vox PL-8860, \$4.98.

▲**WUEHRER** is, by this time, known to us as a sober and respectable pianist who ever observes the musical amenities. His talents are useful in tackling the adorable *Davidshuendler Dances* but they are insufficient to create the kind of magic this music has been known to reveal. There must be a stronger poetic afflatus, a braver tonal imagination at work if we are to have more than Wuehrer offers. On a Decca disc Aeshenbacher gives more, and, if you can forgive his breakdown in the final number, you will find his revelation of the score an invigorating experience. I find the *F minor sonata* (sometimes called the "Concerto Without Orchestra") so poorly organized that I have never been able to appreciate whatever it has to offer. Despite Wuehrer's musical amenities here, I still found this work hard to take. —C.J.L.

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SWEELINCK: *Fantasia chromatica No. 1, Toccatas No. 23 and No. 24, Fantasia in Echo Style No. 14, Von Fortuna werd' ich getrieben No. 64, Mein junges Leben hat ein End' No. 60, Est-ce Mars No. 58, and Balletto des Granduca No. 65* (numbers refer to 1943 edition of Collected Works); Helma Elsner (harpsichord). Vox PL-9270, \$4.98.

▲**ALTHOUGH** the music of Jan Pieters Sweelinck (1562-1621) has been recurrent on recital-type recordings, we have waited until now for a really representative sampling. This disc should not want for buyers. Sweelinck was the last in the illustrious line of Netherlanders who bridged the Renaissance and the Baroque, and he was unique among them for his

influence beyond the low countries (Scheidt and Praetorius were among his pupils). His acknowledged masterworks of vocal polyphony still are reserved for the scholar's delectation, unfortunately, but perhaps not for long. In the meantime this exemplary release provides a cross-section of his considerable production for the keyboard (about 60 works extant), meaning harpsichord or organ because the choice of instruments was optional. As best I can remember, and the catalogues are no help, all or virtually all of the Sweelinck on LP is played by organists. The more dulcet instrument seems to be appropriate for everything herewith; the inference is that it would be the more desirable throughout the Sweelinck keyboard catalogue excepting, of course, such obviously religious pieces as the chorales. Be that as it may, we are in no doubt, listening to the "B" side of this disc, as to the composer's particular affection for the Elizabethan virginalists. To hear these transplantations of their concern with the variation form, doubtless prepared for teaching purposes, is to understand how Sweelinck formed the vital link between two musical epochs. Elsner's crisp finger work is sonorously recorded. —J.L.

VOICE

ARNE: *The Masque of Comus;* Margaret Ritchie, Elsie Morison (sopranos), William Herbert (tenor), Ruggero Gerlin (harpsichord), St. Anthony Singers and L'Ensemble Orchestral de l'Oiseau Lyre conducted by Anthony Lewis. Oiseau-Lyre set OL-50070/71, 2 discs, \$9.96.

▲**A MASQUE** by the English poet, John Milton, was presented at Ludlow Castle in 1634 with a score by Henry Lawes. This work, essentially a poetic drama for the study, was later called *Comus*. Over a hundred years lapsed before an attempt was made to adapt it for public performance. John Dalton (1709-1763) arranged the masque, adding some material and deleting many lines. Thomas Augustus Arne provided music for the first production that took place at Drury Lane Theatre on March 4, 1738 with a brilliant cast that included Mr. & Mrs. Cibber, Mrs. Arne and other theatrical luminaries of the period. It became an immediate success, having numerous performances both that season and many following years. The Dalton-Arne version is used for this excellent recording.

The music consists of an elaborate overture, dances, songs, duets, and choruses. The present recorded performance presents the complete musical portions of the masque, as printed in Vol. 3 of *Musica Britannica*. This is a collection devoted to British music neglected by other publishing houses and

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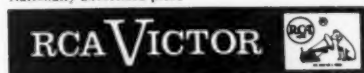
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sponsored by the British Council. The score, edited by Julian Herbage, was checked by Anthony Lewis, who also devised the harpsichord part. The performance, under Mr. Lewis' direction, is sparkling and vivacious, with contrasting moods of deeply felt emotion. Ruggero Gerlin provides the excellent harpsichord continuo. The three soloists have excellent voices with clean, precise diction. The choral portions are sung with enthusiasm and tonal elegance by the St. Anthony Singers. The recorded sound is spacious and well balanced and may be enthusiastically recommended. The complete texts of the vocal portions are included in the notes on the record sleeves. —R.R.

BACH: *Mass in B minor*; Lisa Schwarzweller (soprano), Lore Fischer (contralto), Helmut Kretschmar (tenor), Bruno Mueller (basso), Dreikoenigskirche Choir, Frankfurt, and Collegium Musicum Orchestra, conducted by Kurt Thomas. Oiseau Lyre OL 50094-96, \$14.94.

▲WITH seven recordings of the *Mass*, of which at least four are eminently respectable, any new version must be somewhat better than passable to justify itself. It is rather difficult to say in what way this one excels: certainly it will not place at the top of the list. The opening *Adagio* supplication sets the tone of the generally businesslike performance. The tempi are inclined toward the fast side, and no textual considerations are allowed to arrest the steady flow. The recording balance is not ideal: the top instruments are weak in the orchestral statement of the first *Kyrie* fugue theme, but when the trumpets come in later on they stand out more than they should. The solos are too plentifully supplied with harpsichord background, and the obbligato instruments are apt to be extra strong too. There are a couple of bad side breaks where *attaca* is called for—before the *Qui tollis* and between the *Crucifixus* and *Et resurrexit*. The soloists are variable, with the soprano and bass showing better than the contralto and tenor. Balance aside, the reproduction is clear enough. —P.L.M.

BEETHOVEN: *Missa solennis*; Maria Stader (soprano), Marianna Radev (contralto), Anton Dermota, (tenor), Josef Greindl (basso), St. Hedwig's Cathedral Choir and Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Karl Boehm. Decca DX 135, 2 discs, \$9.96.

▲IT IS perhaps the highest compliment possible to a performance of the *Missa Solennis* to say that it conveys to the listener the tremendous message intended by Beethoven. So often the singers are so occupied with the difficulties the composer has set them that they can do little beyond mastering the notes, if, indeed, they succeed in doing that. This presen-

tation comes nearer to perfection than its recorded predecessors, considered from the two angles of performance and reproduction. The recording balance is unusually good; the orchestra neither covers nor is dominated by the choir, the soloists are strongly in place without being magnified out of all proportion. The conductor's beat is vital, and the text makes itself felt. For one example, listen to the wonderful *decrecendo* in the *Crucifixus* portion and the magnificent burst at *Et resurrexit*. The really celestial *Benedictus*, which so often misses fire because of the human frailty of its performers, is telling in its effect, and the crucial violin obbligato flows as serenely as it should (without the tonal distortion that mars the Toscanini recording). In a place or two I felt that Stader's voice was not big enough to dominate the ensemble, and I was sometimes too conscious of the aspirated choir runs. I suspect a little more rehearsing would have made the performance even better than it is, as some of the attacks are not perfect. But this is as good a *Missa* as we are likely to hear. —P.L.M.

HANDEL: *Messiah*; Adele Addison (soprano), Lorna Sydney (contralto), David Lloyd (tenor) Donald Gramm (bass-baritone), and Handel and Haydn Society Chorus of Boston with Zimble Sinfonietta, conducted by Thompson Stone. Unicorn UNS 1, 3 discs, \$11.94.

▲IN CONTRAST to the several more or less recent "pure" *Messiahs*, this uninhibited choral society version does not disdain to use a combination of editions by Mozart, Franz, Prout and others. It is an odd sensation, nowadays, to hear all the extra orchestration and the filling up of so many rests. The performance is not complete, but includes 41 of the 53 numbers, not all of them uncut. *The trumpet shall sound* is the chief victim of the pruner's sheers—indeed there is little left of it for the basso to sing. The chorus, founded in 1815, has a long tradition of this kind of *Messiah*, but this does not dull its enthusiasm. Occasionally, as in certain alto leads, there are inequalities in the singing, but the overall impression is good. The best of the soloists is Miss Addison, who has come a long way since her participation in the Shaw recording of the Bach *Saint John Passion*. Hers is a lovely voice, and she sings with appealing taste. *How beautiful are the feet* (with a grace note in the opening phrase) is especially fine. I would blame the conductor for the metronomic pace of *I know that my Redeemer liveth*, which misses its effect. Miss Sydney is afflicted with what by now amounts to a real wobble, and Mr. Lloyd, too, should watch his developing *vibrato*. Gramm's voice seems here inclined to dryness; otherwise his singing is admirably straight and honest. He does not attempt to do all the phrases unbroken. Differing as it does

from its predecessors, this *Messiah* answers a special need. All in all, it does this very well. The recording is first rate

—P.L.M.

MOZART: *Litaniae Laurentianae*, K. 195, in D; *Litaniae de Venerabili Altaria Sacramento*, K. 243, in E-flat; Jennifer Vyvyan (soprano), Nancy Evans (contralto), William Herbert (tenor), George James (basso), St. Anthony Singers with Boyd Neel Orchestra and Ralph Downes (organ), conducted by Anthony Lewis. Oiseau Lyre OL 50085 86 \$9.96.

▲ACCORDING to Einstein the first of these litanies, written in 1774, represents a kind of declaration of independence on the part of the composer, who had been kept strictly in line and consistently unhappy by his unsympathetic superior, the Archbishop of Salzburg. The style of the work has been condemned as wordly and operatic, though few could deny the exalted beauty of the *Agnus Dei* for soprano solo and chorus. K. 243 dates from two years later. Says Einstein: "... this is one of his most personal, most Mozartean works; only a purist's attitude towards church music can prevent one from marveling at it and loving it. To reject it because of such an attitude would be almost like rejecting the great Last Judgment or The Fall of the Damned of Rubens as painting, simply because some of the female blessed or damned are not at all shy about displaying certain undeniable charms."

The performances are substantial and satisfying, with special honors for Miss Vyvyan's singing of the *Santa Maria* and the heavenly *Agnus Dei* in K. 195. The recording brings the chorus rather close upon us, but it is clear and sonorous in sound. —P.L.M.

MUSSORGSKY: *Khovanschina*—*Prologue*; Act 1, *The Scribe and the Moscow Populace*; Act 2, *Prophecy of Martha*; Act 3, *Martha's Song of Love and Despair*; *Aria of Shaklovite*; *Scene of the Carousing Strelitz and Finale*; Zata Dolokhovanova (Martha); Pavel Pontyriagin (Scribe); Veniamin Shetsov (Kuzka); Alexander Pirogov (Shaklovite); Alexander Tikhonov (Shaklovite); Boris Dobrin (Prince Ivan Khovansky); Chorus and Orchestra of USSR Radio, Bolshoi Theatre Orchestra, Stanislavsky, and Nemirov-Danchenko Theatre Orchestra, conducted by Vassili Nebolsin, Alexei Kovalev and Samuel Samosud. Vanguard VRS 6022, \$4.98.

▲HERE are a few selections from Mussorgsky's problematical unfinished opera. The scene of the Scribe and the people is missing from the Rimsky-Korsakov edition of the score. One wonders how the composer's friend could sacrifice the really lovely choral section that concludes the scene. Aside from this, the best parts

of the recording are those sung by the fine mezzo-soprano, Dolokhovanova. Pirogov, in his aria, is disappointing, for the voice is ponderous and unsteady, sadly indefinite as to intonation. The reproduction is powerful but rather raw; the voices have too much the advantage over the orchestra. —P.L.M.

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at various stages of her brilliant career. The soprano's unusually high register, her command of melting pianissimo in the upper tones, and her rather careful but always musical treatment of songs are here for those who want a representative collection, emphasizing the several facets of Miss Pons' vocal elegance and musicianship. —M.de S.

acoustical technique of 1914, I was astounded at the contrast the two performances created. Did people in those days really sing these things more as though they meant it? Certainly, the truth of Amato's performance, his complete dramatic conviction in the situation, makes Warren sound like an oratorio singer whose first-class voice produces well placed sounds." I am afraid my opinion remains unchanged today. To one brought up on Amato's *Eri tu?* and Ruffo's *Alla vita*, there is something unconvincing about Warren's very careful and self-contained singing. And Mitropoulos sets an unbelievably slow tempo in the latter aria that creates a general somnolence.

progress. It is likely to create a demand for more Tallis. —P.L.M.

LATE REVIEWS

BARBER: *Symphony No. 1, Op. 9*; **HANSON:** *Symphony No. 5 (Sinfonia Sacra)*; *The Cherubic Hymn*; the Eastman-Rochester Symphony Orchestra and the Eastman School of Music Chorus conducted by Howard Hanson. Mercury MG-40014, \$3.98.

▲THE Barber is a modern masterpiece, unquestionably his finest work in the extended forms and perhaps the great American symphony of them all, not excluding the No. 3's of Harris, Copland, or Schuman, or Schuman's No. 6, either. For years I lived with the shellac performance of Walter, which was one of his most notable phonographic achievements. More recently I have endured a Swedish interpretation that was sonically a nightmare. Now, at long last, a more than adequate replacement for the Walter is at hand. Hanson has given us a resplendent disclosure, not as Italianate in its lyricism as the music sometimes is, and not as bound together by its inherent tensions as one might have wished, but withal far more faithful to the spirit of the score than was Paray with the Philadelphians on a recent New York visit. Paray being a Mercury artist, we must be grateful that another of its roster got the assignment first. So saying, it would be discourteous to speak ill of the good doctor's latest symphony, which proceeds inspirationally from the Resurrection story in the Gospel According to St. John. Likewise *The Cherubic Hymn*, which is drawn from the liturgy of another St. John, surname Chrysostom, who died in 407. Hanson is a skilled craftsman, a very skilled craftsman, whose expressive message always has eluded these ears. But composers should compose and they should be heard, and the steady stream of Hansoniana on LP has been a small enough price to pay for his unrelenting dedication to the cause of others. Smashing good sound. —J.L.

DALLAPICCOLA: *Canti di Prigionia*; **DELAGE:** *Quatre poèmes hindous*; *Berceuse phoque*; **GUARNIERI:** *String Quartet No. 2*; respectively the Chorus and Orchestra of Santa Cecilia conducted by Igor Markevitch, Martha Angelici (soprano) with an unidentified orchestra conducted by André Cluytens, and the Quatuor Pascal. Angel 35228, \$4.98 or \$3.48.

▲THIS recording was made under the auspices of UNESCO; hence its curious mingling of Italian, French, and Brazilian representation. Taken individually, the works are well worth our attention. I do not object to their proximity, therefore, and trust that you will not be put off by

the apparent hodge-podge. Dallapiccola's *Songs of Prison* (1938-41) are at once tender and powerful in sentiment; the evocations of Mary Stuart, Boethius, and Savonarola do not disguise a political connotation of particular poignance in these days of renascent fascism. Angelici does not betray the implications of her name in either of the settings by Maurice Delage (b. 1879). Hindu music holds endless fascination for the receptive listener, even when it is highly stylized, as it is herewith, to be sure. Why *The Seal Lullaby* should be so determinedly non-Occidental I cannot say, because Kipling's Mowgli spoke passable colonial English. Still, the *Jungle Books* are exotic enough to lend appropriateness to this treatment. Guarnieri's quartet soars and sings in the best traditions of tropical post-Impressionism. Excellent sound throughout. —J.L.

GRIEG: *Concerto in A minor, Op. 16*; **RACHMANINOV:** *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Op. 43*; Abbey Simon (piano) with the Hague Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Willem Van Otterloo. Epic LC-3182, \$3.98.

▲UNLESS you are completely satisfied with whatever versions you may have, do not fail to hear this pair of splendid performances. The sound is ringing, the orchestral support admirable, and Simon's pianism deserved no less. His tone is glistening, his technique impressive, his taste beyond reproach. More than ordinary interest will attach to this young artist's subsequent recordings. —J.L.

HAIEFF: *Piano Concerto*; *Five Pieces for Piano*; *Four Juke Box Pieces*; Sondra Bianca (piano, in the concerto), Leo Smit (piano), and the Philharmonia Orchestra of Hamburg conducted by Hans-Jürgen Walther. MGM E-3243, \$3.98.

▲THE Concert Hall Society has had a Smit performance of the Haieff in its Limited Edition series for some time and there was talk of its being released for general distribution. Bianca's is equally persuasive, if just a trifle less virtuosic. I happen to like this work, but also I play it infrequently these days and in truth its Orientalized Stravinskyism does not edify as much as it entertains. Still, that is not a negligible virtue, and offhand I cannot name another concerto of such recent vintage (1952) that possesses so much of it. The overside trifles are engaging enough, although Smit's winning way is perhaps why. I continue to marvel at Walther's grasp of the American idiom. Serviceable sound. —J.L.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Suite No. 3 in C, Op. 55*; L'Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire de Paris conducted by Sir Adrian Boult. London LL-1295, \$3.98.

▲THE dated competitive version may be retired without hesitation. Boult goes in for unaccountable rubato here and there, when you least expect it, but his tempi are fairly winged for the most part and he somehow gets a wonderfully Tchaikovskyian coloration out of these French strings. Indeed, this is a virtuoso performance, which is not at all usual in Paris. I should add that balletomanes will disagree, and understandably, for Boult's pace in the *Theme and Variations* is decidedly undanceable. Fine sound. —J.L.

TURINA: *Danzas Gitanas*; **ALBENIZ:** *Airs of Spain*; **VILLA LOBOS:** *The Baby's Family*; **MOMPOU:** *Scènes d'Enfants*; Marisa Regules (Siena pianoforte). Esoteric ESP-3002, \$5.95.

▲ANOTHER in Esoteric's series of recordings featuring the Siena pianoforte. This time we get Spanish keyboard literature from our own century. Played well by the young Argentine Miss Regules, this recital still sounds more quaint on the Siena piano than anything else. One listener should not have cared whether the playing had been on a modern piano. Perhaps, that would, indeed, have been better; after all, that is what the composers had in mind. —C.J.L.

WAGNER: *Overture to The Flying Dutchman*; *Good Friday Spell from Parsifal*; *Prelude and Love-Death from Tristan und Isolde*; *Forest Murmurs from Siegfried*; the Detroit Symphony Orchestra conducted by Paul Paray. Mercury MG-50044, \$3.98.

▲PARAY has everything a Wagner conductor should have, I think, except a conviction of the composer's greatness. That last measure of incandescence with which a Toscanini performance glows is a step beyond Paray's conscience, and beyond that he will not go, which is as it should be. Many listeners prefer their Wagner this way, and all such are commended to this issue without further reservation. If they own its predecessor (MG-50021), more of the same will be welcome indeed. Panoramic sound. —J.L.

Scherchen Reissues

(Continued from page 10)

Haydn and analysis of each symphony by the Haydn authority, Karl Geiringer. Both booklets are illustrated, the Haydn one with many that take us back to the time of the composer and the performance of these symphonies.

Scherchen has enjoyed rare privilege in the recording of these famous works

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To be sure, he has more competition in the Beethoven than in the Haydn symphonies, since Walter, Weingartner and Toscanini each have also performed the entire nine. But Scherchen has the honor, or distinction, of being the first conductor to record all twelve of the *London Symphonies*, thanks to the foresight of Westminster. Despite the excellence of many earlier Haydn symphonies, these twelve represent the composer at the height of his symphonic powers. As Geiringer says, "In the *London Symphonies* instrumental music reached a peak hardly surpassed in eighteenth century art." Scherchen's musical treatment of these scores has on the whole been widely praised. To be sure, other performances of some individual symphonies have been preferred by various critics, including ourselves, but few would deny that all of Scherchen's interpretations are not authoritative and of the first class. This omnibus is not only a tribute to Haydn but also a tribute to the conductor.

Scherchen's way with Beethoven is as individual as is Toscanini's, Walter's or Weingartner's. His aim, it has been said, in all musical performances (and this covers the Haydn symphonies), is to teach the listener to master music with the "mind." He is not concerned alone with the emotion or action of the music's drama, but also with its intellectual stimulation. In his way, he is as meticulous and as attentive to detail as any conductor with a degree of concentration second to none. Sometimes his close mental application tends to give weight to the music where others are more animated. Both Toscanini and Scherchen are more tense and vital than Walter and Weingartner. Toscanini's intensity derives from the emotional vitality of the music while Scherchen's derives from the mental stimulation he receives from his long contemplation of the architecture of each Beethoven symphony.

It is at once an adventure and an elucidation in interpretative artistry to expose oneself to the performances of all nine of the Beethoven symphonies by several different conductors, a privilege that listeners in large cities can more often realize. By listening to more than one performance from a recording, the individualist in the end discovers for himself the interpretation with which he prefers to live. Yet, living intimately for a long time with one man's performance can result in one becoming obstinately narrowed in his viewpoint with the result that one often fails to enjoy a first-rate performance by another conductor. LP with its duplications allows one to hear and discover the attributes of more than one man's approach to a great work of music. Maybe listeners owing different performances of a great work would do well to interchange once in a while to prevent indoctrination with one's conductor's ideas and to forestall bigotry. —P.H.R.

POPS SPOTLIGHT

HOT VS. COOL is an old argument in jazz but still unsettled. Leonard Feather has put together a 12-inch MGM disc (E-3286) that pits the Messrs. Gillespie, DeFranco, Winding and Don Elliott against the equally renowned Messrs. Jimmy McPartland, Edmond Hall, and Bobby Byrne's Dixielanders. They take a crack each at *How High the Moon*, *Muskrat Ramble*, and such, then get together on the *Hot and Cool Blues*; a real dogfight. Choose your sides because you can't lose. And whatever your side, I recommend the same impresario's new book, *The Encyclopedia of Jazz*, published by Horizon Press. There is a long introduction by Duke Ellington, a brief history, a fascinating musical analysis of jazz, a glossary of jargon, and a wonderfully complete biographical section among other features. Feather has made a real contribution to scholarship, if shorthairs will not take umbrage at that stuffy old cliché. The most, man.

BENNY you know who has been back in the news lately with the appearance of a certain film featuring his erstwhile self as impersonated by Steve Allen. All of the major record companies have been busy putting out tie-in LPs. RCA Victor has walked off with top honors, I would say, with its lavish limited edition of five 12-inch reissues (LPT-6703) collectively subtitled "The Golden Age of Swing". Who doesn't remember the Goodman *Bei Mir bist Du schön*, *Where or When*, etc., etc., in those incomparable quartet and trio settings (with talent like Hampton, Krupa, Elman, and vocalists Helen Ward and Martha Tilton) not to mention such famous big band hits as *Get Happy* and *There's a Small Hotel*. I tell you, it makes one feel ancient to sit through this collection. But what a feast of delights it is!

NOSTALGIA comes in all sizes and shapes. If you have a fond memory of the flickers, as I believe they were called, do not miss the Coral *Silent Movie Music* (CRL-57024), on which pianist Jack Shandlin evokes to a "T" an hour or so of what you might have heard in a moon pitcher house way back when.

THE LADIES are with us always, thanks be. This month's crop is sizable. First, on London LL-1373, there's the one and only Beatrice Lillie, with Eddie and Rack at the keyboard, in a program of mostly shattering song-monologues, notably *There Are Fairies at the Bottom of our Garden*, which is itself worth the price of the recording. On the distaff side I think all other prizes go to RCA Victor this time. Still the champion, by me, is Lena Horne, and her batch of goodies (LPM-1148) includes just about the last word on *It's Love* (the title tune of the album) and the ubiquitous *Frankie and Johnny*. The runner-up is no newcomer, either,

but LPM-1152 is the first disc she's ever had to herself. I'm talking about Gwen Verdon, she of *Damn Yankees*, and it's about time we had a whole hour of her alone. She calls her album *The Girl I Left Home For*, which who wouldn't, you will wonder, when you have heard it. Her *Daddy* and *The Lady Is a Tramp* are something extra special.

NEW LABELS on the market include most auspiciously Kapp—not a new name in the business, to be sure, the late Jack Kapp having made history in the old days. The new generation has something of his flair for top talent, most impressively their stellar pianist, Roger Williams. Here is a boy who played thirteen instruments when he was eight, if you can picture it. In the course of his classical training, which was considerable, he settled down permanently at the keyboard, which is all right at this desk. The settings are chic, rather too redolent of the night club, but this guy Williams plays so much piano that whatever rhythm or orchestra backs him up never gets heard anyhow. Really a tremendous musician. His recent issues are KL-1012 (*Autumn Leaves, Just One of Those Things* etc.), and KL-1003 (*My Funny Valentine, The Nearness of You* etc.) and KL-1008 (*Kashmiri Love Song, April in Portugal* etc.) All equally recommended, but not without the qualification that the essence of Williams might be captured more successfully if Kapp would simply dangle a mike over him and let him rip. Fie on all carefully planned programs when there is as volatile an artist as Roger Williams in the studio and in the mood. —J.A.S.

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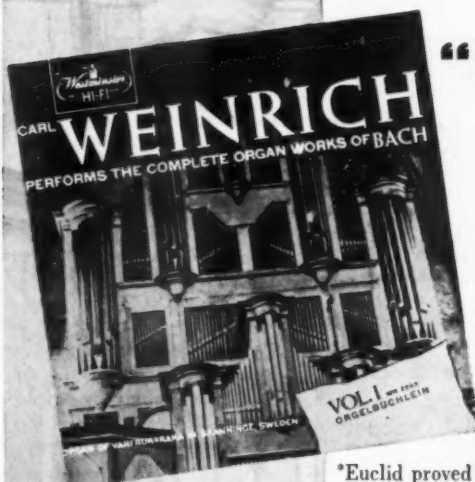
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